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"THE OLD RELIABLE":

THE HISTORY OF THE SPRINGFIELD WAGON COMPANY, 1872-1952

A Masters Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School
Southwest Missouri State College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts - History

by

Steven Lee Stepp

July 26, 1972

PREFACE

Long before the day of automobiles, trucks, and improved highways, Americans were a people on wheels; wooden wheels. The horse-drawn wagon was the basic means of transportation in the nineteenth century. Farm wagons loaded with produce rumbled along dusty country roads, ore wagons and lumber wagons carried the raw materials of industry from mines and logging camps to the railroads, and freight wagons hauled vital supplies to settlements and towns not yet linked by rail to the rest of the nation. As the country expanded westward, wagons carried pioneer families to new territories and the army which was sent to protect them depended upon wagons for its provisions.

The great demand for wagons spurred the development of a tremendous wagon manufacturing industry and of gigantic wagon companies. Some of the larger wagon manufacturers eventually enjoyed annual sales approaching a million dollars. Wagon building became big business during the late 1800's, and, as such, it was subject to all the evils as well as the benefits resulting from that period of rapid industrial expansion. The men who built and operated the nation's largest wagon companies battled each other as furiously as did the railroad magnates and industrial barons of the same period.

The wagon manufacturing industry, in many ways, was a forerunner of the present automobile industry. It developed dealer systems, financing plans, guarantees, and even a type of assembly line production. Any industry which attains the importance in society that the wagon industry achieved necessarily has a great economic and technological effect upon the nation. It is surprising therefore, that only one extensive history of a large wagon manufacturing company has as yet been written; that being A Century on Wheels: The Story of Studebaker by Stephen Longstreet. Even that volume lacks detail in its accounts of the great days of wagon building in the period 1870-1900.

It has been the great fortune of this author to have gained access to the early business papers of the Springfield Wagon Company. These papers, still in their original form and largely intact, provide great insight into the daily workings of the largest wagon company west of the Mississippi River. They also reflect the long, often bitter competition between the great manufacturers; a struggle from which the Springfield Wagon Company finally emerged victorious.

This is the story of the Springfield Wagon Company, one of the pioneer transportation industries of the trans-Mississippi West. It was founded in the 1870's, soon after the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad reached Springfield, Missouri. After an initial struggle for survival,

the firm entered a period of rapid expansion and prosperity. The Springfield Wagon Company soon established itself as the city's leading industry and the largest manufacturer of freight and farm wagons west of the Mississippi River.

As the company grew, the Springfield wagon became nationally known as "The Old Reliable" and was recognized as the standard of excellence in the wagon industry. The company survived several disasters and built during periods of prosperity, always guarding its reputation for quality and craftsmanship. The firm and its wagons kept that reputation through eighty years of operation.

While the Springfield Wagon Company faced many of the same problems as its competitors, its history is not typical of other wagon companies. The Springfield firm was a comparative late-comer to the wagon industry and, at first, experienced considerable difficulty in competing with the older, established companies. It did survive, however, and gradually absorbed or outlasted all of its competitors. After nearly a century of successful enterprise, it finally ceased operations; not because it had failed in business competition, but because there was no longer a demand for its products. This fact distinguishes it from all other wagon companies and makes it a worthwhile subject for historical research.

This history has been carefully drawn from the surviving business papers of the Springfield Wagon Company

and from other related sources. Former employees of the Springfield Wagon Company have aided greatly in filling gaps in written records, and I am indebted to them for their patience and cooperation. Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, the last owner of the Springfield Wagon Company, has been most generous and helpful as have his employees at Fulbright Wood Products Company of Fayetteville, Arkansas. Several of the photographs contained in this work are courtesy of the Circus World Museum of Baraboo, Wisconsin.

A special note of gratitude is due the staff of the Public Libraries of Springfield and Greene County, Missouri. Their help has been immeasurable in this research. Finally, a word of sincere thanks to Dr. B. B. Lightfoot, Professor of History at Southwest Missouri State College, whose direction and comments have made this work possible, to my typist, Maxine Bass who has made it presentable, and to my wife, Peggy, without whose encouragement I might never have attempted it at all.

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CHAPTER I

Origins of the Springfield Wagon Company

The American wagon manufacturing industry was basically a creation of the nation's westward expansion. Prior to 1821, most wagons and farm-to-market carts were built by blacksmiths or in small shops. These establishments were capable of providing an occasional wagon or road cart to local customers and generally had no difficulty in keeping their production equal to demand for such vehicles. East of the Mississippi River, freighters transported their cargo by water or rail wherever possible, and used wagons for shorter overland hauling. Although the number of wagons in such use was substantial, demand was not sufficient to spur the development of large scale wagon manufacturing.¹

In 1821, Mexico won her independence from Spain and opened the Santa Fe Trail to American traders. Soon, wagon trains loaded with merchandise began crossing the plains in a lucrative trade from Missouri to Santa Fe. The freighters demanded heavy, durable wagons capable

¹For a detailed description of the wagon building industry before 1840, see Stephen Longstreet, A Century on Wheels: The Story of Studebaker, (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952).

of hauling tremendous loads in rough terrain, and wagon shops all over the country responded by producing "prairie schooners", special freight wagons similar to the conestogas of the colonial period. These huge wagons, originally built by the Pennsylvania Dutch settlers, were modified for the flat terrain of the prairies and turned out by hundreds of small wagon builders. Great care was taken in the selection of materials, and workmanship was usually of a very high quality. By the mid-1820's and early 1830's thousands of "prairie schooners" were crossing the plains in long, winding freight trains.²

The same type of wagon was popular with settlers moving west in the great wagon trains of the 1840's and 1850's, and as demand for the freight wagons and "prairie schooners" increased, several large wagon companies were formed. One of the first of these was the J. Murphy Wagon Company of St. Louis. A young man named Joseph Murphy, who had first learned the wagon trade while working as a helper in one of the small wagon firms in the area, opened his own shop in St. Louis in 1841. He initially modified conestoga wagons for use by the freighters and later built huge freight wagons of his own design. Murphy used only the best of seasoned woods and his craftsmanship was

²For a complete discussion of the high plains freighting and wagons used, see Henry Pickering Walker, The Wagonmasters: High Plains Freighting from the Early Days of the Santa Fe Trail to 1880, (Norman,

so excellent that his shop grew into a substantial factory. The J. Murphy Wagon Company later changed its name to the Bain Wagon Company and moved its factory to Pekin, Illinois.³

Another of the early leaders of the wagon industry was the Schuttler Wagon Company of Jackson, Michigan. This company began operations in the 1850's and hired convict labor to gain and added competitive advantage. Inmates from a nearby prison were used as factory workers and paid at the rate of fifty cents per day. Although some problems did arise from the use of convict labor, the Schuttler wagon became famous for its strength and durability. The company originally built heavy freight wagons, but gradually won fame for its farm and cotton wagons which were popular in the South. After many years of operation in its original home, the Schuttler Wagon Company moved to Chicago, Illinois. There it built a larger factory and achieved greater success.⁴

Another of the early manufacturers was the Studebaker Manufacturing Company of South Bend, Indiana.

Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), See also Raymond W. Settle and Mary Lund Settle, Empire on Wheels (Story of Russell, Majors & Waddell Freighting Company), (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1949), and Alexander Majors Seventy Years on the Frontier (New York: Rand, McNally & Co., 1893).

³Walker, The Wagonmasters, p. 97.

⁴Ibid.

The Studebaker company, like the other early wagon builders, got its start as a small shop contracting for freight wagons for the Southwest trade routes. Studebaker wagons were known as one of the best built brands of their time. Like the other early manufacturers, Studebaker was located near a plentiful supply of hardwood wagon materials and used this proximity of supply to reduce production costs. Lumber for Studebaker wagons was seasoned from three to five years and wheels and running gear were soaked in boiling oil to drive out moisture and prevent deterioration.⁵

This reputation for quality earned the Studebaker company a U. S. Government contract for army supply wagons in 1861. It was this contract that finally put the company in a sound financial condition and provided the means for expansion. By 1868 the Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company was the largest wagon builder in the nation and paid its workers twelve dollars per day; quite a respectable salary for that time.⁶

With the completion of the trans-continental railroad in 1869, the wagon industry underwent a rapid change. The old wagon freighting companies were replaced by railroads as the most efficient means of transportation across the plains. Conestoga

⁵Longstreet, A Century on Wheels, pp. 1-39.

⁶Ibid., p. 39.

wagons and "prairie schooners" faded from the scene and were replaced by a different type of vehicle known as the farm and road wagon. These wagons were somewhat less bulky than the conestogas and freight wagons and were much better suited to the general type of wagon usage. Afterwards, the horse (or mule) drawn wagon was used primarily for hauling materials between the railroads and towns off the rail routes, and to transport farm products to market.⁷

As the result of the changes brought by the trans-continental railroad, wagons became more standardized and the demand for wagons actually increased. The railroads made transportation to distant markets possible, and farmers and other suppliers needed more wagons to carry their goods to the railroads.

Standardization of farm and road wagons made mass production not only possible but economically desirable. Large companies like Studebaker, Bain, and Schuttler were producing thousands of wagons in their factories and soon, one and two man shops found that they could not compete. As hundreds of small wagon shops closed, a few more large wagon companies entered the market. These included the Birch, Cooper,

⁷Nick Eggenhoffer, Wagons, Mules, and Men (New York: Hastings House, 1961), pp. 130-31.

Fish Brothers, John Deere, Labelle, Mitchell, Moline, and Wilson firms.⁸ These companies soon dominated the industry to such a point that it was nearly impossible for a new manufacturer to gain entry and survive in the market. The big wagon builders carried on savage price cutting competition and advertised extensively at county fairs and other similar gatherings. In addition, buyers for the leading wagon companies traveled through all the hardwood producing areas near them purchasing huge quantities of lumber and attempting to reduce available supplies to their competitors.

It was into this ruggedly competitive industry that the Springfield Manufacturing Company (later Springfield Wagon Company) entered in 1872. The road to prosperity would be long indeed!

Homer Franklin Fellows, one of the founders of the Springfield Wagon Company, was born in Wellsborough, Tioga County, Pennsylvania on July 28, 1831. He was the first son of Erastus and Elizabeth Fellows. The Fellows family had its roots deep in the soil of the new nation. Two brothers, John and Drane Fellows, had emigrated from England in early colonial times and settled in Canaan, Connecticut. There, Jonathan Fellows, Homer Franklin's grandfather, was born. Jonathan

⁸Nick Eggenhoffer, Wagons, Mules, and Men (New York: Hastings House, 1961), pp. 130-31.

Fellows served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War and, afterwards, moved to Pennsylvania where he built a farm out of the wilderness and raised a family. Erastus Fellows was a small boy when the family moved from Connecticut, and was greatly influenced by his father from whom he learned a strong love of freedom and respect for the individual.⁹

Erastus grew up in Wellsborough and spent a year in Cincinnati, Ohio as a young man. Shortly after returning to his home town, he married Elizabeth Johnson, a widow. The couple remained in Wellsborough and established themselves upon a farm, which they soon made prosperous. Fellows later became well known as a temperance advocate and from 1825 to 1865 owned and operated Fellows' Temperance House in Wellsborough. A thorough reformer, Erastus Fellows became an ardent abolitionist during the 1850's, and his Temperance House served as a refuge for slaves escaping to Canada before the Civil War.¹⁰

Homer Franklin Fellows spent his childhood on his parents' farm, working for his father in spring and summer and attending the local school during the

⁹Jonathan Fairbanks and Clyde Erwin Tuck, Past and Present of Greene County, Missouri II (Indianapolis: A. W. Bowen & Co., 1915), 1364-65.

¹⁰Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, II, 1364-65.

winter months.¹¹ At the age of seventeen, he took a job as a clerk in a Wellsborough general merchandise store. He remained in that position for one year, then accepted an offer to teach school at Osceola, Pennsylvania. At the conclusion of the school term, young Fellows entered Genese Junior College in Lima, New York. After one year of study, he became interested in settling in Texas and decided to start a new life.

The year was 1853. The nation was expanding westward and land was plentiful in the recently annexed southwestern areas. Homer Franklin Fellows was twenty-two years old and eager to move on to new horizons. He organized a party and started toward Texas.¹²

While traveling through Illinois, young Fellows became ill and was forced to stop briefly in Rock Island to recuperate.¹³ He made new acquaintances there and obtained letters of introduction to several prominent businessmen and officials in Iowa, including Governor James W. Grimes. Apparently feeling that Iowa offered him a more immediate chance for success than Texas, the young traveler left his group and journeyed

¹¹Return Ira Holcombe, ed., History of Greene County, Missouri (St. Louis: Western Historical Co., 1883), p. 751.

¹²Holcombe, Greene County, Missouri, p. 751.

¹³Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, II, 1365.

to Muscatine. After a short stay there he moved on to Burlington, taking a job as a traveling salesman and buyer for the firm of Geer & Baum. In that capacity, Homer F. Fellows served for a year, traveling to the East at times to purchase stock for his employers. Business experience and knowledge gained while thus employed was valuable to him later in life. In 1854 Geer & Baum dissolved their partnership and Fellows traveled to Chariton, Iowa where he sold out the firm's remaining merchandise.¹⁴

The next year he was presented with yet another opportunity. Baum, his former employer, offered him part interest in a real estate business in Plattsburg, Missouri. He accepted, moved to Plattsburg, and entered the firm of Scheller & Baum.¹⁵ After one year, he bought out his partners and formed the new abstract and real estate company of Fellows, Todd and Robinson with offices in Warsaw and Springfield, Missouri. Homer F. Fellows moved to Springfield in 1857, taking over the local office of his company.¹⁶

On November 18, 1859, Fellows married Martha Alvira McElhany, the daughter of Robert J. McElhany,

¹⁴Holcombe, Greene County, Missouri, p. 751.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, II, 1365-66.

one of Springfield's most prominent businessmen.¹⁷ By 1860 he was well known and accepted among the elite of Springfield's business community. In the presidential election that year, he was one of three persons in Greene County to vote for Abraham Lincoln.¹⁸ His opinions were not always widely shared nor were his causes always popular, but Homer F. Fellows was a man who stood by his convictions. The nation faced the greatest crisis in its history and he was determined to take part in the struggle.

Homer F. Fellows was a strong Unionist, and shortly after the Civil War began he became involved in procuring supplies in Springfield for the U. S. Army. His younger brother, Norris W., had joined him in Springfield in 1860, and the latter enlisted in the Quartermaster's Corps at Rolla, Missouri.

Early in 1861, H. F. Fellows made a business trip to Washington, D. C. for Colonel Franz Sigel. While in the capital he made the acquaintance of President Lincoln. In May, 1861, the President appointed him registrar of public lands for the Springfield district of Missouri; a position he held until after the battle of Wilson Creek, when the Confederates occupied

¹⁷Holcombe, Greene County, Missouri, p. 752.

¹⁸Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, II, 1366.

Springfield and he was forced to flee to Rolla.¹⁹ There he became involved once again in collecting supplies for the U. S. Army.

In 1863 the Forty-sixth Missouri Militia was mustered into service, and H. F. Fellows received a commission as lieutenant-colonel in the command of General McNeil. The unit was used primarily to guard military stores and was on duty during the last of General Sterling Price's raids into Missouri. Colonel Fellows, as he was always known afterwards, served with efficiency and distinction until 1864, when his unit was deactivated.²⁰

After his release from the militia, the Colonel joined his father-in-law in the wholesale grocery business, and established the firm of McElhany and Fellows with branch offices at points along the St. Louis & San Francisco Railroad and headquarters at St. Louis.²¹ During 1864, Fellows also operated a shipping and transfer business between Rolla and Springfield, the railroad having not yet connected the two cities.²²

¹⁹Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, II, 1366.

²⁰Walter B. Stevens, Missouri the Center State, 1821-1915, III, (Chicago: S. J. Clark Publishing Co., 1915), 320.

²¹Ibid.

²²Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, II, 1367.

When the war ended, the Colonel returned to Springfield and devoted his attention to furthering his business interests. He held stock in a real estate business and in the local telegraph company, and began actively working toward building of a railroad from Rolla to Springfield.²³ He also owned a general store in Springfield and a hardwood furniture factory at Leon, Mexico. At his furniture factory, native labor did massive carving and produced fine hand rubbed walnut furniture for wages of fifteen cents a day. During his early travels in Mexico, H. F. Fellows had become well acquainted with Emperor Maximilian, and once took his family to vacation at the Emperor's villa. As a token of this friendship, he ordered a beautiful, ornately carved carriage built at his furniture factory for Maximilian.²⁴

In the midst of success, tragedy came to Fellows. On October 5, 1869, his wife died, leaving him to raise three young daughters.²⁵ He reacted to her death by increasing his activities in the politics and business of the city. In 1871, Colonel Fellows

²³Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, II, 1367.

²⁴Docia Kerrell, "Stately Fellows Home, Soon to be Hospital, Stirs Reminiscences," Springfield Leader & Press, June 18, 1941, p. 3.

²⁵Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, II, 1367.

built the first grain elevator in Springfield and also began producing specially designed mowers and reapers in small quantities. Homer Franklin Fellows, the farm boy from Pennsylvania, was a success. His fortune was already in the making, and he was a respected public figure.

Springfield was a town buzzing with excitement in 1871. Until that time, the city had been largely an agricultural market; a place where farmers and lumbermen from the neighboring counties came to purchase supplies, sell produce and livestock to the town's merchants, and perhaps have repairs made on equipment. Business in the city had consisted primarily of small shops and stores and a few wholesale grocery and hardware firms.

The Atlantic & Pacific Railroad finally reached Greene County in 1871, and Springfield began a gradual but definite transformation from agricultural town to trade center. For years, civic and business leaders had worked toward the day when Springfield would be linked by rail to St. Louis and the cities of the East. Now that the great day had finally arrived, they were determined to take advantage of the new opportunities open to them.

The city's newspapers urged the establishment of local industry, pointing to the fact that raw materials were available locally and that rail transportation

made distant markets readily accessible.²⁶ These articles were written to persuade the public to help finance new industry. Springfield and area residents were informed that they would benefit by purchasing from the proposed factories, thereby keeping their money "at home." Prominent businessmen, including Homer F. Fellows, declared that for years Springfield had been at the mercy of eastern manufacturers and had been exploited because of its lack of industry.²⁷ They told their readers that the time had come when Springfield could begin to develop an industrial economy and become a great city of the West. No longer would the people of southwest Missouri be forced to pay high prices for "inferior" merchandise; now they could produce for their own needs and profit from sales to other markets.

On January 25, 1872 the Springfield city council received a proposal to loan money to certain concerns for the establishment of manufactories in the city. This was to be done by the issuance of \$200,000 of municipal bonds to be purchased by citizens who would become "benefactors" of the developing industries. The funds thus raised would be divided among four new industries. A wagon and farm implement factory, a cotton mill, a woolen mill, and an iron foundry were

²⁶For articles see Springfield Weekly Leader and Missouri Weekly Patriot, 1871-1872.

²⁷Ibid.

to be encouraged and aided. Each of these new companies was to be organized by local stockholders in advance of the bond issue and was to be partially subsidized by the city funds.²⁸

In response to the proposal before the city council, a group of fifty-two prominent businessmen and merchants organized the Springfield Manufacturing Company for the purpose of building wagons, plows and farm implements. Their Articles of Association, filed with the Secretary of State on March 2, 1872, listed the following stockholders:

S. H. "Pony" Boyd--President	F. S. Hefferman
John B. Oliver--Director	Jos. Sonneborn & Co.
Robert J. McElhany--Treasurer	J. S. Wolfe & Brother
G. D. Milligan--Vice-President	Wm. J. Teed
F. J. Underwood--Director	Ezra Barrett
J. M. Wilhoit--Director	C. W. Eversole
F. H. Sheppard--Director	Wm. Walters
J. T. Hubbard--Director	David D. Sheppard
J. G. Danforth--Director	J. H. Minehardt
W. C. Hornbeak	Allen Mitchell
J. B. Brown	H. P. Pierce
S. M. Julien	J. Schmook
Peter Imler	J. J. Puller
J. A. Patterson	J. F. Atzert
A. F. Ingram	Wm. McAdams
J. McAdoo	Joseph Farries
C. H. Evans	L. M. Rainey
F. S. Jones	Charles H. Heer
John S. Phelps	G. W. Frickie
O. H. Fravirse	D. C. Kennedy
J. Graves	L. M. McLaughlin
Charles Sheppard	Sam O'dell
Alexander & Jones	C. B. Owen
J. G. Armoth	Nathan Bray
Wm. D. Sheppard	James Hays
Henry Sheppard	Wm. McKerrell

²⁸"Manufacturers Bill Before City Council,"
Missouri Weekly Patriot, January 26, 1872, p. 3.

Four hundred of the eight hundred authorized shares of stock were issued at a value of \$50 per share, thus capitalizing the firm at \$20,000 and providing adequate funds to purchase a site and some equipment and materials.²⁹ The Springfield Manufacturing Company acquired land on the south side of Mill Street between Boonville and Campbell Streets and there erected its first wooden sheds and workshops. A total of \$8,000 was spent for real estate and buildings, and \$6,000 was invested in machinery.³⁰

On April 2, 1872 R. G. Dun & Company made its first financial evaluation of the new firm. Although the factory had not yet begun production, the investigating agent reported "Springfield Manufacturing Company--Hon. S. H. (Sempronius) Boyd, Pres.--we think them good."³¹

During the next few weeks, finishing touches were made on the new wagon factory, storage sheds, millroom, and office. Although these first structures were architecturally unimpressive, they represented a

²⁹Articles of Association of the Springfield Manufacturing Company, March 2, 1872, photostatic copy, Archives of Missouri Department of State, State Capitol, Jefferson City, Missouri.

³⁰"Our Showing," Missouri Weekly Patriot, January 2, 1873, p. 3.

³¹Dun & Bradstreet Collection (R. G. Dun & Co.), Manuscript Division of Baker Library, Harvard Business School, Missouri vol. XII, 36.

landmark along the way to Springfield's industrialization.

At the same time that the new factory was approaching completion, the long-awaited municipal bond election was held. On May 16, 1872, the wagon factory funds were approved by a vote of 449 to 124.³² A total of \$23,000 was allocated to aid the city's four new industries, with \$2,100 going to the Springfield Manufacturing Company.³³

When the factory began operations in June, it entered into fierce competition in an old and booming industry. Many large firms in the East were building wagons and some had as much as thirty years of experience behind them. Although there were hundreds of wagon manufacturers in the country at that time, the industry was dominated by a few enormous companies. It was against these giants that the new Springfield Manufacturing Company was soon to be engaged in a struggle for survival. Few, if any, of the original stockholders could have possibly envisioned the ferocity of that struggle or the ultimate success which was to come to the enterprise they had founded. With the passage of the municipal bonds, Springfield entered

³²"To Manufacturers," Missouri Weekly Patriot, May 17, 1872, p. 3.

³³"Our Showing," Missouri Weekly Patriot, January 2, 1873, p. 3.

into a new era, and neither the city nor the wagon building industry would ever be the same again.

CHAPTER II

The Springfield Manufacturing Company

After months of planning and preparation Springfield's new wagon factory opened in June, 1872. Twenty-five employees were hired at a salary of twelve dollars per week and wagon materials began arriving from lumber yards and iron companies in St. Louis and several eastern cities.¹

The Springfield Manufacturing Company was interested in manufacturing farm implements as well as wagons, and they learned that Colonel H. F. Fellows had several patterns for mowers and reapers in his possession.² Sempronius H. "Pony" Boyd, the president of the company, purchased the patterns and hired Homer F. Fellows as secretary of the firm and superintendent of the new factory.

Fellows immediately took charge of the factory and production began in July. During that month, he designed and built the first Springfield wagon as a

¹"Our Showing," Missouri Weekly Patriot, January 2, 1873, p. 3.

²"Mowers and Reapers for Sale," Missouri Weekly Patriot, June 2, 1872, p. 2.

pattern for his workmen to follow.³ It was a farm and road wagon, carefully built from first grade materials. No piece of lumber with knots or grain defects was used and all lumber was thoroughly dried. The running gear was built from hickory and was painted orange with black trim. The wheels were made of white oak, soaked in boiling oil to prevent shrinkage, and painted to match the running gear.⁴ The bed of the wagon was painted dark green trimmed with yellow and was equipped with a feed box, a seat, and a canvas cover supported by wooden bows.⁵

As soon as the pattern was built, Fellows organized production for the workmen. Some of the men worked in assembly crews, and the rest were assigned to production of parts. Each of these men had a specific part to make (spokes, bolsters, etc.) and every part as well as the assembly had to be done properly before a wagon was approved by Colonel Fellows. As in most wagon factories of the time, the front part of the running gear was assembled first. This was an important operation because the distance from the center of each

³"Industry at Wagon Factory; Reflects Era of Prosperity," Springfield News & Leader, March 10, 1935, p. C-4.

⁴F. P. Rose, "The Springfield Wagon Company," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, X (Spring, 1951), 99.

⁵"Industry at Wagon Factory....," Springfield News & Leader, March 10, 1935, p. C-4.

end of the axle to the center of the tongue had to be exactly equal if the wagon was to run true. Next the rear part of the running gear was assembled. This also was a delicate job, since the distance from each end of the rear axle to the center of the reach pole connecting the two gear assemblies had to be exactly equal.⁶

Wheel assembly was a separate operation. The front wheels consisted of six felloes or rim sections, twelve spokes and the hub. The rear wheels, which were made to carry more weight, consisted of seven felloes, fourteen spokes and the hub. First, the spokes were driven into holes in the hub by a spoke driving machine, next, the felloes were fitted onto the spokes and finally the iron tire was added. The fitting of the tire was one of the most important and difficult steps in the assembly process. The flat bar of tire iron was first cut to a length just slightly shorter than the circumference of the wheel, then it was heated until pliable. The tire iron was next bent around the wheel by the tire bending machine and welded together at the ends. As it cooled, the tire iron contracted, insuring a tight fit on the wheel. Finally, the wheels were soaked in boiling

⁶H. David Condrón, "The Knapheide Wagon Company," Journal of Economic History, (May, 1943), pp. 35-6.

linseed oil to preserve the wood.⁷

Wagon production was well under way by the end of summer, and Springfield wagons were ready for the fall market; the time when farmers invested harvest money in new equipment. The Springfield Manufacturing Company sold 200 wagons during the last six months of 1872 and planned for sales of 1,000 wagons the next year.⁸ Prospects for the wagon factory looked so bright that the Missouri Weekly Patriot boasted:

"The Springfield Wagon Factory promises to be one of the best paying investments our capitalists ever invested in; and it is a wonder to all that such an enterprise was not thought of before. The demand is greater than the present capacity of the institution; and it is intended by the company to increase its facilities so as to turn out wagons not only for this immediate vicinity, but for the entire southern trade. There is no reason why this institution, requiring so much encouragement in its infancy, shall not expand its proportions until the magnitude of its trade is felt as far north, south, east, and west as the famed "Cooper" or "Studebaker". The wagons are pronounced equal to any manufactured by those celebrated makers and are sold for less money...."⁹

The article concluded by congratulating the Springfield Manufacturing Company for its "bold strike

⁷H. David Condon, "The Knapheide Wagon Company," Journal of Economic History, (May, 1943), pp. 35-6.

⁸"Our Showing," Missouri Weekly Patriot, January 2, 1873, p. 3.

⁹"Wagon Factory," Missouri Weekly Patriot, November 14, 1872, p. 3.

at those foreign manufacturers who have heretofore monopolized the entire trade of this section."¹⁰

Just as Colonel Fellows' business career was furthered by the initial success of the Springfield Manufacturing Company, happiness returned to his personal life. On August 15, 1872, he married Minnie L. Boyden, the daughter of a retired wagon builder from Neosho, Missouri. One year later, his only son, Homer Franklin Fellows was born.¹¹

Things continued to go well for the company during the last months of 1872. A stock of materials for 600 wagons was accumulated, and the popularity of the Springfield wagon grew rapidly as it came to be known as an excellent wagon for the rugged Missouri and Arkansas hill country.¹² This was primarily because the Springfield wagon had a hinged drop-tongue, which allowed easier travel for horses or mules in mountainous terrain where stiff-tongue wagons were often unmanageable.¹³

As it approached the end of the year, the Springfield Manufacturing Company had forty employees and

¹⁰"Wagon Factory," Missouri Weekly Patriot, November 14, 1872, p. 3.

¹¹Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, II, 1367.

¹²"Our Showing," Missouri Weekly Patriot, January 2, 1873, p. 3.

¹³F. F. Stice (Manager of Springfield Wagon Company, 1941-52), Interview, October 28, 1971.

held high hopes of a booming business in 1873.¹⁴ Those hopes were to be frustrated.

On December 10, 1872, the company was forced to suspend operations due to a breakdown in the factory's steam heating system.¹⁵ This problem resulted in the loss of a full month's production, and caused the wagon factory to get a late start on manufacturing for the spring market.¹⁶

On February 27, less than one month after the resumption of operations, the first R. G. Dun report of 1873 was issued. It listed the Springfield Manufacturing Company as having stock and other assets of \$23,000 with \$18,000 of paid up stock. The reporter predicted that the wagon factory had "good prospects of making money."¹⁷

In fact, the company faced two serious problems. It was still underfinanced and did not yet have an adequate sales organization. A meeting was held on April 30 to consider the first of these problems. The minutes of that board meeting show that two-thirds of the stockholders had agreed to authorize the board

¹⁴F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company", Arkansas Historical Quarterly, X (Spring, 1951), 99.

¹⁵Missouri Weekly Patriot, January 2, 1873, p. 3.

¹⁶Ibid., January 23, 1873, p. 3.

¹⁷Dun & Bradstreet Collection (R. G. Dun & Co.), Missouri vol. XII, 36.

of directors to contract debts and borrow money. The board set ten percent per year as the maximum interest to be paid on loans and stipulated that any loans contracted must have the approval of President Boyd and Secretary Fellows.¹⁸ This decision permitted the directors to borrow more money (some from Fellows) and eased the financial difficulties somewhat, but the lack of a sales organization still hindered the company.

The next R. G. Dun report, dated June 14, showed capital stock of \$50,000 with \$20,000 of paid up stock. Assets were listed at \$42,000 and liabilities at \$18,000. The company was said to be making money and paying its debts promptly, although recently embarrassed by an inability to sell wagons. The report concluded by announcing that preparations were being made to revise the factory's operation and place it on a more solid foundation. In addition, arrangements were being made by which all wagons built could readily be sold.¹⁹

The arrangements referred to in the report included the establishment of a dealer organization. Prior to June, 1873, wagons had been sold at the factory and most customers were local residents. Spring-

¹⁸Minutes of the Board meeting of the Springfield Manufacturing Company, April 30, 1873, photostatic copy, Archives of Missouri Department of State, State Capitol, Jefferson City, Missouri.

¹⁹Dun & Bradstreet Collection (R. G. Dun & Co.), Missouri vol. XII, 36.

field wagons had first been offered for sale during the "fall market" of 1872, and had been rapidly sold.²⁰ After that initial sales boom, the local demand was temporarily satisfied and sales slumped. This convinced the stockholders that they had to seek wider markets in order to maintain a steady sales volume. With the organization of a dealer system, Springfield wagons could be sold all over the state of Missouri and the company could concentrate its efforts on production.²¹ At first, the dealers simply purchased wagons from the factory and sold them for whatever price they could. There is no indication that any dealer commission or financing plans were offered at that time.

The dealer system might have solved the problems of the Springfield Manufacturing Company had it not been for the Panic of 1873. On September 18, the great banking house of Jay Cooke & Company failed. The firm had been backing the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad and had undertaken many other grandiose projects simultaneously. The combined

²⁰F. F. Stice, manager of the Springfield Wagon Company 1941-52, explained to the author that most wagons were sold at two times during the year. The "spring market" was the time when farmers bought wagons needed for summer work. The "fall market" occurred at harvest time when farmers received payment for their crops.

²¹For a listing of early Springfield wagon dealers, see Appendix B.

cost of these speculations was simply beyond the financial capability of the famous financial firm. When Jay Cooke & Company failed, the stock exchange panicked. Within a few days several other powerful banks and trust companies failed, and the best stocks and securities dropped as much as thirty-five percent in value. Factories and businesses closed, workers were laid off, and prices for manufactured goods and raw materials plunged.²²

Wagon builders like the Springfield Manufacturing Company were devastated by the crash. Because they had limited capital, they depended upon steady sales to provide a quick return on invested funds. When sales slumped as a result of the panic, the marginal manufacturers were forced to shut down to cut expenses. This was the case with the Springfield factory.

While it ruined many small manufacturers, the crash provided a tremendous opportunity for the giant wagon builders. The Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company was quick to seize that opportunity. Before the panic, Studebaker already had a factory a block long in South Bend, Indiana. Over 190 men were employed there, building thousands of wagons, buggies, carriages

²²For a more detailed discussion of the Panic of 1873, see Dumas Malone and Basil Rauch, Crisis of the Nation: 1841-1877 (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1960), pp. 302-04.

and other vehicles each year. The company had ready capital to hire additional workers at lowered wages and to buy up huge quantities of select wagon materials at depression prices. As a result, the Studebaker company cut its wagon prices fifteen percent below its competitors. This action had a predicable effect upon the market. The well-known Studebaker wagons were purchased readily in preference to those built by smaller firms.²³

At the end of 1873, the Springfield Manufacturing Company was nearly bankrupt. As it shut down the factory to cut expenses, the company had been unable to produce wagons for the fall market, and because of the price cutting actions of the large manufacturers, it had been unable to sell even the small stock of Springfield wagons on hand. On December 10, R. G. Dun & Company noted that the loans and debts of the company had gone to protest.²⁴ There seemed to be little hope of recovery.

The business depression continued into the next year, and so did hard times for Springfield's wagon factory. Another R. G. Dun report, issued February 11, showed that the company was not operating and that it

²³Longstreet, A Century on Wheels, pp. 39-42.

²⁴Dun & Bradstreet Collection (R. G. Dun & Co.), Missouri vol. XII, 36.

barely had enough assets to pay its debts.²⁵ The factory remained closed throughout the spring and early summer, resuming operations in July.²⁶ Springfield's papers responded to the reopening with enthusiasm, carrying letters of congratulation from dealers and predicting great success in Texas and the Southwest where Springfield wagons had become popular the year before.²⁷

Success did come in limited measure. Springfield wagons were ready in time for the fall market and the company exhibited its products in several county fairs. On October 8, 1874 a Springfield wagon was judged the best two-horse wagon at the Greene County Fair; the first such award it had ever won.²⁸ Sales were better than they had been, but still very disappointing. The Springfield wagon, although of excellent quality, was under-priced and outsold by the major manufacturers. The owners of the Springfield Manufacturing Company were becoming disillusioned and were reluctant to invest or borrow any more funds to finance further operations.

²⁵Dun & Bradstreet Collection (R. G. Dun & Co.), Missouri vol. XII, 36.

²⁶"The Springfield Wagon," Missouri Weekly Patriot, July 9, 1874, p. 3.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸"The Fair," Missouri Weekly Patriot, October 8, 1874, p. 3.

Late in the fall, the stockholders held a meeting and voted to surrender their stock to anyone who would assume the company's debts. A committee comprised of C. M. Edwards, D. C. Kennedy and H. F. Fellows was appointed to evaluate the firm's assets and liabilities and to publish an offer to sell. The committee decided to make the best showing possible in hopes of inducing someone to purchase the company. All possible materials were put in marketable shape, debtors were pushed to remit payments, and a financial statement was prepared.²⁹ When the next stockholders meeting was held on December 3, 1874, the committee reported total assets over liabilities of \$4,906.09.³⁰ An offer to sell or to surrender stock to anyone assuming the debts was published in the newspapers of both Springfield and St. Louis, but there was no response to the advertisement.

Finally, Colonel Fellows and Robert J. McElhany offered to assume the debts of the Springfield Manufacturing Company in return for a surrender of stock by the rest of the stockholders. Their offer was accepted, and the firm was reorganized.

After years of struggle, the Springfield Manufacturing Company was about to enter a very colorful and prosperous period of operation.

²⁹"The Wagon Works," Springfield Daily Herald, February 10, 1884, p. 3.

³⁰A copy of the December 3, 1874 Financial statement is contained in Appendix C.

Homer F. Fellows and Robert J. McElhany assumed managerial control of the Springfield Manufacturing Company in January, 1875. Their offer to assume the debts of the firm had not given them ownership, but had constituted a type of loan. In return for that loan, it was agreed that they would take control of the factory and operate it as they saw fit. The loan was to be repaid with interest out of the profits of the company. Fellows and McElhany were joined in the venture by Norris W. Fellows and by Captain Ezekiel Boyden of Neosho, Missouri.³¹ Boyden, a former wagon builder from Peoria, Illinois, was also the father-in-law of Colonel Fellows, who had married Minnie L. Boyden in 1872.³²

Shortly after taking over the factory, Colonel Fellows and Robert McElhany traveled to St. Louis where they arranged for money and materials to enable them to resume operations. The Missouri Weekly Patriot reported their trip, and, on January 27, proudly announced that the wagon factory would reopen within ten days.³³

Upon their return to the city, Fellows and McElhany held a meeting with the original stockholders. In that meeting on February 3, stock was surrendered, as had

³¹Missouri Weekly Patriot, January 14, 1875, p. 3.

³²Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, II, 1367.

³³"The Wagon Factory," Springfield Weekly Advertiser, January 27, 1875, p. 3.

been previously agreed, and those who wished to sell their interests were paid by Fellows.³⁴ Stock was then re-issued to the new partners and to those original stockholders who desired to retain an interest in the company. A complete reorganization followed. The Articles of Association were amended by a two-thirds vote of the remaining stockholders and it was decided that the factory would be managed thereafter by a board of three directors composed of a president, a vice-president and a treasurer.³⁵ H. F. Fellows was elected president and secretary, Norris W. Fellows became vice-president, R. J. McElhany assumed the position of treasurer, and Ezekiel Boyden was appointed superintendent of the factory.³⁶

On March 20, R. G. Dun & Company noted that operations at the wagon factory had resumed on a day-to-day basis. Assets of the Springfield Manufacturing Company were listed at \$20,000 and capital at \$30,000. Although prosperity did not come quickly, business did improve and production continued uninterrupted through the spring as the new directors proved their managerial

³⁴"The Wagon Works," Springfield Daily Herald, February 10, 1884, p. 2.

³⁵Minutes of Stockholders' Meeting of Springfield Manufacturing Company, photostatic copy, Archives of Missouri Department of State, State Capitol, Jefferson City, Missouri.

³⁶"Manufacturing: Springfield Wagon Factory," Missouri Weekly Patriot, December 30, 1875, p. 1.

talents. As late as June 5, R. G. Dun reports still listed the company as "largely in debt", but sales steadily increased and as the fall market drew near Springfield's wagon factory began looking more and more like a success.³⁷ Five hundred wagons were built during the summer and early fall as the company enjoyed its best year of business to that time. The Springfield Weekly Advertiser took note of the firm's recent success on August 4 and announced with pride that Springfield wagons were giving "universal satisfaction."³⁸ The popularity of Springfield wagons continued to grow through the fall, and the 1875 sales season was climaxed on October 6, by the company's successful exhibition at the St. Louis Fair.³⁹ At the end of 1875, there was no doubt that the Springfield Manufacturing Company was a thriving enterprise. More than 600 wagons had been sold since March, and the factory was expanding to accomodate production of 1,000 wagons for the next year. The company had a work force of thirty men and a payroll in excess of \$2,000 per month. In addition,

³⁷Dun & Bradstreet Collection (R. G. Dun & Co.), Missouri vol. XII, 149.

³⁸"The Springfield Wagon," Springfield Weekly Advertiser, August 4, 1875, p. 3.

³⁹"A Fine Wagon," Springfield Weekly Advertiser, October 6, 1875, p. 3.

capitalization of the firm had risen from \$30,000 to \$40,000 during the year since reorganization.⁴⁰

The success of the wagon factory and the fine reputation of the Springfield wagon were established facts by December 1875. Colonel Fellows and his associates were being praised in local newspapers for guiding the bankrupt firm to such an amazing recovery.

While commenting that a great future seemed in prospect for the company, H. F. Fellows publicly announced on December 30 in the Missouri Weekly Patriot that the price of the Springfield wagon would be reduced from \$60 to \$58 the next year. The Springfield Manufacturing Company would offer the best wagon on the market at the lowest price.⁴¹

The public optimism and announcement of the price reduction were a fitting end to a phenomenal year of recovery. Although the general economic condition of the country had improved during 1875, much of the credit for the success of the wagon factory was due to efficient management.

Prior to reorganization, the Springfield Manufacturing Company had purchased many of its wagon parts from eastern suppliers and had thus been vulnerable to

⁴⁰"Manufacturing: Springfield Wagon Factory," Missouri Weekly Patriot, December 30, 1875, p. 1.

⁴¹Ibid.

supply problems. These problems usually resulted when the large manufacturers engaged in purchasing competition; thus intentionally creating shortages of materials.⁴² When this happened, the Springfield factory experienced difficulty in locating supplies and usually had to pay inflated prices for what it received. When Boyden joined the firm, he brought with him many years of practical experience. As factory superintendent, he lowered costs and obtained more uniform quality by producing his own parts. Spokes, hubs, axles, and other parts had been previously purchased in completed form, but after 1875, they were made from raw materials at the factory.⁴³ Much of the hickory for axles and running gears was purchased in southwest Missouri. White oak for spokes and hubs came from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina, and poplar lumber for wagon boxes or beds came from Tennessee.⁴⁴

Another improvement at the factory which contributed to increased efficiency was the new blacksmith shop. In that shop most of the iron wagon parts could be made at a fraction of the cost of finished parts from suppliers. Perhaps the most important feature of

⁴²This problem is discussed in Chapter I.

⁴³"Manufacturing: Springfield Wagon Factory," Missouri Weekly Patriot, December 30, 1875, p. 1.

⁴⁴Ibid., December 30, 1872, p. 3.

the blacksmith shop was the skein testing machine.⁴⁵ By using that device, the workmen could be sure of setting all the skeins alike. The result was a freer running wagon.⁴⁶

Ezekiel Boyden's practical knowledge and H. F. Fellow's talent for management were two of the most important reasons for the company's success in 1875. The next year was to bring even greater achievements.

As 1876 began, the Springfield Manufacturing Company was still in debt to Colonel Fellows and his associates, but the firm was doing a fine business and looking forward to an even better year.⁴⁷ As Springfield wagons gradually gained acceptance in the market, the company became more competitive with the large manufacturers.

The new prosperity of the wagon factory came to symbolize Springfield's industrial development. On February 2, the Springfield Weekly Advertiser reported on the new blacksmith shop at the factory and concluded its article by saying:

⁴⁵"Manufacturing: Springfield Wagon Factory," Missouri Weekly Patriot, December 30, 1875, p. 1.

⁴⁶The skein was a steel or cast iron thimble which fit over the end of an axle and provided the surface upon which the hub of the wheel ran. Proper fit was essential for a true-running wagon. (See diagram in photo section).

⁴⁷Dun & Bradstreet Collection (R. G. Dun & Co.), Missouri vol. XII, 149.

"We will yet hear the ring of the hammer and the sound of machinery from all points in our town. Let the people of enterprise come here. This is what we want. Men, not things--men with get up to them."⁴⁸

The ring of the hammer and the sound of machinery continued through the spring, as the demand for Springfield wagons rapidly increased. One of the reasons for this sales boom was the warranty offered by the Springfield Manufacturing Company. Unlike most manufacturers, the makers of the Springfield wagon warranted all their materials and workmanship to be of first-class quality and promised to make good any breakage or failure occurring under normal use within one year after purchase.⁴⁹

The reputation of the Springfield wagon spread rapidly throughout the Mid-west and South during the early months of 1876. During that time, the company carried on an extensive newspaper advertising campaign. One of the ads featured in the series offered a \$500 challenge to any person or company wishing to contest the superiority of the Springfield wagon. It read:

"\$500 CHALLENGE!"

The Springfield Manufacturing Company will forfeit the sum of FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS if they do not build the strongest and lightest running wagon in this market.

⁴⁸Springfield Weekly Advertiser February 2, 1876, p. 3.

⁴⁹A Springfield wagon warranty is included in the photo section of this work.

Everyone knows that the wheel and axle constitute the strong parts of a wagon, consequently they will put up \$500 against a like sum to be put up by anyone accepting this challenge upon the following conditions: Each party shall choose a man, and the two chosen will select a third as an expert, who shall test the wheels according to established rules and usages for such trials. The wheels to be selected by the committee from the ordinary stock offered for sale and the wheel resisting the greatest strain shall be declared victorious and the losing party shall forfeit and pay \$500 to be donated to some charitable or educational institution in this country to be selected by the committee."⁵⁰

On March 13, P. E. Studebaker accepted the challenge in behalf of the Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company of South Bend, Indiana. He appointed his local agent, James Hodnett, to represent his company. H. F. Fellows publicly acknowledged Studebaker's letter of acceptance on March 18, and the agents of the two parties selected H. O. Dow of Springfield as the judge. The committee then decided that the contest would be held at one o'clock, March 31, 1876, on Springfield's public square. The loser was to pay \$500 to Drury College of Springfield, Missouri.⁵¹

By this series of events, the Springfield Manufacturing Company became committed to a direct public

⁵⁰"\$500 Challenge," Springfield Weekly Advertiser, February 2, 1876, p. 2.

⁵¹"Correspondence," Springfield Weekly Advertiser, March 22, 1876, p. 3.

confrontation with its most powerful competitor. The stage was set for the great "wagon trial".

Promptly at one o'clock on the appointed day, a Springfield wagon pulled by two immense grey horses appeared on the square, where a large crowd had gathered, and took up its position. The judges, spectators, and representatives of the Springfield company prepared for the contest, but the Studebaker wagon did not make an appearance. After waiting for three hours, the judges finally awarded the victory to the Springfield Manufacturing Company. The Springfield wagon then proceeded back down Boonville Street to the wagon factory, followed by a cheering crowd. Whistles at the factory blew to celebrate victory; the Springfield wagon had won its showdown with Studebaker.⁵²

Following the wagon trial, Springfield wagons became even more popular. Local newspapers viewed the absence of the Studebaker wagon as proof of the superiority of the Springfield. The Springfield Weekly Advertiser reflected the pride of local citizens on April 5, when it announced:

"We are unable to state any reason why the Studebaker folks were not on hand, they having accepted the challenge and boasted a great deal. Now our folks have a wagon they can bet on, and they are ready to back up their opinion."⁵³

⁵²"Correspondence," Springfield Weekly Advertiser, April 5, 1876, p. 3.

⁵³Ibid.

The spring and summer of 1876 brought record prosperity to the Springfield Manufacturing Company. R. G. Dun reports in April and June showed that the company was doing a good business and that it was relatively free of debt.⁵⁴ By August, output at the factory averaged thirty wagons per week and sales in southwest Missouri and northwest Arkansas surpassed those of eastern firms.⁵⁵ Fifty men were employed in the factory and wagon materials were arriving at the rate of ten carloads each week. Total freight tonnage received by the wagon factory exceeded that of any other firm in the county. In addition to iron and raw lumber, shipments included spokes from Vernon, Illinois, dimension lumber for wagon beds from Union City, Tennessee, and hubs from Cuba, Missouri.⁵⁶

Wagons built at the Springfield factory in 1876 had twenty-five more pounds of iron parts than any other brand and were designed to carry heavier loads than other wagons of the same size. In spite of their heavier construction, Springfield wagons were sold for

⁵⁴Dun & Bradstreet Collection (R. G. Dun & Co.), Missouri vol. XII, 149.

⁵⁵"Springfield Manufacturers-Wagon Factory at Head of List-This Seasons Operations," Missouri Weekly Patriot, August 10, 1876, p. 3.

⁵⁶"Springfield Manufacturers," Missouri Weekly Patriot, August 10, 1876, p. 3.

as much as \$14 less than their competitors. It was this situation which led a traveling representative of the Milburn Wagon Company to concede that his efforts were useless in the Missouri-Arkansas market. In his words "the Springfield wagon is as good as the best and is sold cheaper here."⁵⁷

Not all rival wagon agents held favorable opinions of the Springfield wagon. On November 23, the local Cooper Wagon Company representative placed an article in a Springfield newspaper claiming that the \$500 Challenge meant nothing and would produce laughter among commercial wagon builders. He commented that the Cooper factory in Dubuque, Iowa used more lumber in one day than the Springfield factory possessed, and added that he would not give half-price for a Springfield wagon.⁵⁸ That same gentleman was undoubtedly surprised the next month when the Springfield Manufacturing Company purchased a stock of Cooper wagons and offered them for sale to "those who prefer a foreign wagon."⁵⁹

Thus ended 1876; a year in which the company had sold 850 wagons and made a name for itself by defeating Studebaker in "the great wagon trial."⁶⁰

⁵⁷"Springfield Manufacturers," Missouri Weekly Patriot, August 10, 1876, p. 3.

⁵⁸"The Wagon Question, Once More," Missouri Patriot Advertiser, November 23, 1876, p. 3.

⁵⁹"Our Manufacturing Concerns," Missouri Patriot Advertiser, December 28, 1876, p. 2.

⁶⁰Ibid.

CHAPTER III

The Springfield Wagon Company

The Springfield Manufacturing Company entered its fifth year of operation still "riding high" on the wave of prosperity created by the sales boom it experienced in 1876. The firm did a good business for the month of January, and owned stock and machinery valued at \$25,000 to \$35,000.¹ Anticipating increased sales, the company expanded its facilities. A new office was completed, construction of a two-story warehouse was proceeding, and a large lumber storage lot on the north side of Mill Street was planned.²

In spite of its prosperity, the company still owed several thousand dollars to H. F. Fellows and his associates for money they had loaned, and Fellows took advantage of that indebtedness to gain ownership as well as managerial control of the firm.³

¹Dun & Bradstreet Collection (R. G. Dun & Co.), Missouri vol. XII, 149.

²"Wagon Factory Improvements," Springfield Weekly Leader, January 25, 1877, p. 3.

³Dun & Bradstreet Collection (R. G. Dun & Co.), Missouri vol. XII, 149.

On February 5, 1877, Colonel Fellows brought suit against the Springfield Manufacturing Company for non-payment of debts. In the court case that followed, the judge awarded \$23,000 to Fellows. The stockholders of the company acknowledged the debt and a date was set for payment. When that day arrived, the Springfield Manufacturing Company defaulted and the court ordered a sheriff's sale to satisfy the debt. At the sale, Colonel Fellows, his brother, and Ezekiel Boyden purchased the property, stock, and equipment of the wagon factory. By this chain of events, the Fellows brothers and Boyden became the owners of the Springfield Manufacturing Company.⁴

The settlement of this lawsuit, being somewhat controversial, created ill feelings. Three of the former stockholders, George Woolf, J. S. Woolf, and S. H. Murray, began claiming conspiracy.⁵ They accused Fellows of plotting with his brother and Boyden to take over the company by depleting its funds before suing for payment of debts. This depletion, they claimed, had been rationalized to stockholders as necessary expenditure for expansion of the factory. After a

⁴H. F. Fellows v Springfield Manufacturing Company, February 5, 1877, Greene County, Missouri Circuit Court Records, case #4847, box 437, book O, p. 393, Greene County Courthouse, Springfield, Missouri.

⁵Ibid.

brief period of highly-publicized accusations, the disgruntled former stockholders filed a motion to have the original court decision in the suit set aside on grounds of improper handling of the sheriff's sale.⁶ Their motion was denied and the controversy temporarily subsided; only to rise again during Springfield's 1877 mayoral election.

The wagon factory kept operating and expanding during the legal battle. On March 5, R. G. Dun & Company took note of additional improvements to the factory and estimated the company's total value at \$50,000. That report showed that the firm was "pushing business ahead" and selling a good many wagons, and that the new owners paid promptly and had "very good" credit.⁷ The Springfield Manufacturing Company did a prosperous business through the spring sales season, but a shadow of doubt, arising from the change of ownership, remained in the minds of many local citizens.

The whole controversy over the alleged "sharp practices" of the Fellows brothers and Boyden erupted again in April when Homer F. Fellows announced his candidacy for the office of Mayor of Springfield. The

⁶H. F. Fellows v Springfield Manufacturing Company, February 5, 1877, Greene County, Missouri Circuit Court Records, case #4847, box 437, book O, p. 393, Greene County Courthouse, Springfield, Missouri.

⁷Dun & Bradstreet Collection (R. G. Dun & Co.), Missouri vol. XII, 149.

Colonel's opponents in that campaign immediately claimed that he had fraudulently obtained ownership of the wagon factory.⁸ In addition, rumors began to circulate that Fellows and his partners were about to sell the Springfield Manufacturing Company.⁹ These charges and rumors persisted for several days before the issue was finally settled by the newspaper which was opposing Fellows' candidacy. On April 5, one of the editors of the Springfield Weekly Leader, the city's Democratic newspaper, defended Fellows, the Republican candidate, whom he believed was being unfairly attacked. The writer briefly reviewed the history of the financially troubled Springfield Manufacturing Company and revealed that he had been present at the meeting of the board of directors when the original loan agreement was made with Colonel Fellows. He announced that the board had unanimously consented to the arrangement and that the legal aspects of the resulting lawsuit were quite in order.¹⁰ The next week, R. G. Dun & Company officially refuted the rumor that the wagon factory was to be sold.¹¹ Thus,

⁸"Colonel Fellows and the Wagon Factory," Springfield Weekly Leader, April 5, 1877, p. 3.

⁹Dun & Bradstreet Collection (R. G. Dun & Co.), Missouri vol. XII, 149.

¹⁰"Colonel Fellows and the Wagon Factory," Springfield Weekly Leader, April 5, 1877, p. 3.

¹¹Dun & Bradstreet Collection (R. G. Dun & Co.), Missouri vol. XII, 149.

Fellows was publicly vindicated and, in the balloting that followed, he was elected mayor.¹²

After the city elections, Colonel Fellows once again concentrated his efforts upon building wagons. Business was even better in 1877 than it had been the year before, and Springfield's wagon factory began the summer operating at capacity. Thirty-five men worked full-time, and thirty new Springfield wagons rolled out of the factory each week.¹³ New procedures and product improvements characterized the factory's operation, and combined to increase output. A kiln was built to be used in a final treatment for air-dried lumber, and an improved brake assembly was designed for the Springfield wagon. The company also began the practice of seasoning all wagon wheels for six months before installing tires on them. This precaution insured that any wood shrinkage occurred before the tire was added, thus eliminating most problems with

¹²Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, I, 697. Fellows' election as Mayor of Springfield in 1877 marked the beginning of his political career. He won re-election to the office by an even greater margin in 1878, and narrowly missed election as state senator on the Greenbacker ticket the same year. In 1880, he was the Greenbacker candidate for Governor of Missouri. After that time, he remained active in local and state politics as an independent. For a more detailed discussion of Fellows' political career, see Return Ira Holcombe, History of Greene County, Missouri (St. Louis: Western Historical Co., 1883).

¹³"Our Manufacturing Interests," Springfield Patriot-Advertiser, May 17, 1877, p. 3.

loose tires. Perhaps the most important improvement made in Springfield wagons in 1877 was the use of a new type of skein, designed by and made specially for the Springfield company. This skein was larger and heavier (1/16" thicker) than those used by most wagon builders, and it allowed Springfield wagons to carry much heavier loads while running with less friction than other brands.¹⁴

Improvements in wagon design and manufacturing methods were not the only changes at the wagon factory during the summer of 1877. In May, the owners decided to reorganize their company under a new name in hopes of disassociating it from its past record of insolvency. On June 2, the State of Missouri officially granted the charter of the new firm and the Springfield Wagon Company came into being.¹⁵ It was initially capitalized at \$25,000, with 250 shares of stock issued at a value of \$100 each.¹⁶ Homer F. Fellows, Norris W. Fellows, and Ezekiel Boyden were the sole owners, and each man continued to serve in his former position; Colonel

¹⁴"Our Manufacturing Interests," Springfield Patriot-Advertiser, May 17, 1877, p. 3.

¹⁵Articles of Association of the Springfield Wagon Company, June 2, 1877, photostatic copy, Archives of Missouri Department of State, State Capitol, Jefferson City, Missouri.

¹⁶Ibid.

Fellows as president, his brother as vice-president, and Boyden as factory superintendent.¹⁷

The change of name apparently had a beneficial effect upon the concern. Business continued at record levels through the summer, and the company's image did improve. In July, R. G. Dun & Company made an unusually extensive report on the Springfield Wagon Company and concluded that, while heavily in debt in the past, the wagon company could expect "better prospects" now.¹⁸

The R. G. Dun report predicted correctly. During the late summer, the Springfield Wagon Company sold so many wagons in its trade area that the larger manufacturers became concerned and began cutting prices. Colonel Fellows and his partners refused to be undersold by their powerful competitors and reacted by declaring a "wagon war".¹⁹ They placed notices in area newspapers stating that:

"In response to a concerted effort by 'foreign' wagon competitors to ruin the Springfield Wagon Company, the Springfield Wagon Company...

¹⁷Articles of Association of the Springfield Wagon Company, June 2, 1877, photostatic copy, Archives of Missouri Department of State, State Capitol, Jefferson City, Missouri.

¹⁸Dun & Bradstreet Collection (R. G. Dun & Co.), Missouri vol. XII, 149.

¹⁹"Wagon War," Springfield Weekly Leader, August 2, 1877, p. 3.

will sell wagons to farmers at the same price as competitors sell to dealers in carload quantities."²⁰

The results of the "wagon war" notices were overwhelming. Within two weeks after the ads appeared, the Springfield Wagon Company had to back-order shipments to some markets in order to supply demands nearer home.²¹ Almost overnight, it became one of the most successful manufacturing interests of the state.²² Letters poured in from companies as far away as Texas, asking for sales agencies and attesting to the popularity and durability of Springfield wagons.²³

By September, sales were booming beyond all expectations. The company sold over \$35,000 worth of wagons during the summer, and fifteen men were added to the factory workforce.²⁴ A month later, wagon production reached a peak of seventy-five wagons per week, and the value of the firm's assets rose to a record \$60,000.²⁵

²⁰"Wagon War," Springfield Weekly Leader, August 2, 1877, p. 3.

²¹"Queen of the Ozarks," Springfield Weekly Leader, August 16, 1877, p. 2.

²²Ibid.

²³"The Springfield Wagon," Springfield Patriot-Advertiser, August 30, 1877, p. 3.

²⁴"The Springfield Wagon Factory," Springfield Patriot-Advertiser, September 27, 1877, p. 3.

²⁵Dun & Bradstreet Collection (R. G. Dun & Co.), Missouri vol. XII, 149.

The Springfield Wagon Company ended the year a smashing success. Over 1,400 wagons had been sold and the company had withstood ferocious competition from the huge eastern manufacturers.²⁶ By declaring the "wagon war" and carrying it out to a successful conclusion, the Springfield Wagon Company had served notice that it would never again be dominated by its competitors. It kept that promise!

Sales of Springfield wagons totaled \$90,000 in 1877, and a part of the profits from those sales was reinvested in the factory the next year. In January, 1878, new spoke-driving and wheel rimming equipment was installed. With this machinery, workmen could make 300 wagon wheels a day. A new two-story brick paintshop-warehouse was also added to the factory.²⁷

The wagon company's recent investments in plant facilities were rewarded during the spring sales season. Business was good, and the firm took advantage of increased production by reducing the price of a complete wagon by \$5.²⁸ At its new price of \$63, the Springfield wagon sold readily in competition

²⁶"Springfield's Business and Businessmen," Springfield Patriot-Advertiser, January 3, 1878, pp. 2-4.

²⁷"The Springfield Wagon," Springfield Weekly Leader, January 3, 1878, p. 2.

²⁸Springfield Patriot-Advertiser, March 7, 1878, p. 3.

with those built by the larger eastern factories, and sales rose to new highs.²⁹ On March 7, the Springfield Wagon Company announced its determination that "no citizen will have an excuse for sending money out of the country when they can buy a BETTER WAGON for less at home".³⁰ By the end of 1878, it seemed that the company had made good that pledge. More than 2,000 Springfield wagons were built and sold that year.³¹

During the next two years, the Springfield Wagon Company steadily expanded its operations. Springfield wagons entered the Kansas and Indian Territory markets in 1880, and the company prepared to build as many as 1,000 wagons annually for these new sales areas.³²

Although the business of the Springfield firm did not compare with Studebaker's sales of \$1,500,000 in 1880, the company's rapid growth did concern its rivals.³³ On June 2, 1881, James Hodnett sued the Springfield Wagon Company. Hodnett, the Studebaker dealer in Springfield, also built a few wagons in

²⁹Springfield Patriot-Advertiser, June 27, 1878, p. 3.

³⁰Ibid., March 7, 1878, p. 3.

³¹George S. Escott, History and Directory of Springfield and North Springfield, (Springfield, Missouri: Patriot Advertiser, 1878), p. 114.

³²"Springfield Wagon Factory," Springfield Patriot-Advertiser, April 5, 1880, p. 3.

³³Longstreet, "A Century on Wheels," p. 52.

his own shop, and called his wagon the "Planters" or "Boss Planters". He claimed that H. F. Fellows and his partners were copying his design and selling a "Planters" wagon built of inferior materials in order to ruin his business. His suit asked that the Springfield Wagon Company be prohibited from selling any more "Planters" wagons or other wagons copied from the "Planters". Had this injunction been granted, it would have severely hampered the company's production, since Hodnett also claimed that certain features on the Springfield wagon were copied from his products. The Springfield Wagon Company categorically denied all of Hodnett's charges and immediately filed a countersuit for slander. After a preliminary hearing, the court dismissed both suits on grounds of insufficient evidence.³⁴ Whether Hodnett's suit was instigated by Studebaker or filed of his own volition, it failed, and the Springfield Wagon Company continued production for the harvest market, unimpaired.

Shortly after the court battle, a great tragedy struck Colonel Fellows; his second wife, Minnie L. (Boyden) Fellows, died on September 24, 1881.³⁵ Despite Fellows' personal and legal problems, the

³⁴James Hodnett v Springfield Wagon Company, June 2, 1881, Greene County Missouri Circuit Court Records, cases 4271 & 4278, boxes 462 & 463, book W, p. 99, Greene County Courthouse, Springfield, Missouri.

³⁵Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, II, 1637.

Springfield firm enjoyed a prosperous fall sales season in 1881, and ended the year a serious competitor to the big eastern wagon builders. On December 1, the company valued its assets at \$77,500.³⁶

Perhaps more than anything else, innovation contributed to the success of the Springfield Wagon Company. Springfield wagons always featured the latest improvements in wagon design, and H. F. Fellows, in particular, displayed an incessant interest in new methods and better equipment to improve his factory's operation. At the end of 1881, the Springfield Wagon Company sent John Massey, their trusted factory foreman, on a tour of eastern wagon factories. His mission was to gather information concerning plant layouts and labor saving machinery, and to evaluate the features of other brands of wagons. In a letter dated January 1, 1882, Massey reported from Chicago that his travels through Indiana and Illinois had been successful in providing many new ideas which he believed could increase the efficiency of Springfield's wagon factory.³⁷ By means of trips such as Massey's, the Springfield Wagon Company kept

³⁶Stock Inventories (1880-1888), Springfield Wagon Company Papers, property of Greene County, Missouri Historical Society, housed in Sheppard Room of Springfield and Greene County Public Libraries (main branch), Springfield, Missouri.

³⁷John Massey to H. F. Fellows, ALS, Illinois 1882 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

abreast of new developments in the industry and constantly enhanced its own operation.

In addition to technological improvements, the management was interested in ways of increasing sales. By 1882, the original dealer system had evolved into a much more sophisticated sales organization. Several of the large wagon companies began offering time sales during the eighties, and the Springfield Wagon Company was forced to meet their challenge. Dealers were no longer restricted to the purchase-resale arrangement of 1873, but were offered a new, more flexible agreement. Under the new plan, dealers could operate in one of two ways. The dealer might purchase wagons outright and resell them at whatever price he could, or have the company place wagons on consignment with him. If the dealer chose to have a stock of wagons placed on consignment, he was authorized to offer time sales and to accept notes on wagons. He then forwarded the notes to the Springfield Wagon Company and assumed responsibility for payment in the event the customer defaulted.³⁸ The company, in turn, sold the notes to banks and financial houses and paid the dealer a commission when the last

³⁸J. R. Pumphrey (dealer), Protem, Missouri to Springfield Wagon Company, June 22, and August 22, 1882, Missouri 1882 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers. Correspondence from other dealers in 1882 reveals that most of them operated under the consignment arrangement and depended heavily upon time sales.

time payment was made by his customer.³⁹ The time payment system offered two advantages to the Springfield Wagon Company; wagons could be sold to customers who could not pay cash, and the dealers were made responsible for collections. Dealers were also authorized to act as company agents to examine and replace broken parts claimed under warranty.⁴⁰

The revised dealer organization enabled the Springfield Wagon Company to expand into new areas of Kansas and Indian Territory during 1881 and 1882. The new dealers in Indian Territory encountered a frustrating problem at first. Mitchell wagons, built in Racine, Wisconsin, had been sold in that market for so long that people would not buy other brands. Finally, some Springfield wagon agencies solved the problem by having the factory paint their wagons like Mitchells.⁴¹ Although sales did not equal those of the 1878 "wagon war", the

³⁹The Springfield Wagon Company sent most of its dealers' notes to Kean & Company, Bankers (Chicago). Several paid up notes are contained in the Illinois 1882 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

⁴⁰R. S. Jacobs & Company, General Merchandise (dealer), Greenfield, Missouri to Springfield Wagon Company, September 13, 1882, Missouri 1882 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers. The warranty issued with each new Springfield wagon promised replacement of any parts broken in normal use within one year, and required dealers to examine and approve all damage claims.

⁴¹Patterson & Foley General Merchandise (dealer), Eufaula, Indian Territory to Springfield Wagon Company, October 26, 1882. Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

new sales system did offset the initial effect of time sales by competitors.⁴² New types of Springfield wagons also appeared during 1882. Special log wagons with 4" wide wheels and log bunks instead of wagon boxes were built for lumber companies in Missouri and Arkansas, and heavy, flat-bed equipment wagons were designed and sold to railroad contractors who were laying rails across Indian Territory.⁴³ As the nation built westward, new types of wagons were continually required to meet the demands of developing industries. The Springfield Wagon Company was quick to adapt its production to supply these new customers.

Transportation became a problem when the company expanded its trade area. Wagons were usually shipped by railroad, and the dealers were supposed to pay freight charges. Railroad rates, however, were neither uniform nor consistent, and dealers in the same or neighboring towns often paid different rates. There were even instances of individual dealers paying different rates for each shipment. The company often intervened in behalf of its dealers and persuaded the railroads to adjust rates, but this problem was not completely eliminated until more adequate government regulation of rail-

⁴²F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company," p. 99.

⁴³See log wagon in photo section.

roads was instituted several years later.⁴⁴ The great flexibility of railroad rates during this period did offer one advantage. The Springfield Wagon Company received enough carloads of freight that it was entitled to a special low rate on shipments of incoming supplies.⁴⁵

In October, 1882, the attention of the owners of the wagon factory was temporarily diverted away from such mundane concerns as freight rates. L. W. McLaughlin, a former stockholder in the Springfield Manufacturing Company, owned land adjacent to the wagon factory on the east. Both his land and the wagon company property were located along the banks of a small stream known as Jordan Creek, from which the wagon factory used water to power its steam-driven equipment. One day in early October, McLaughlin dug a ditch to divert water from the creek across his land. In doing so, he partially blocked the regular channel with dirt, reducing the flow of water downstream. This led to a reduction of steam power at the factory and brought about a greater problem. Water from McLaughlin's ditch flowed off his property and flooded the wagon company's lumber storage yard.

⁴⁴R. S. Jacobs & Company, General Merchandise (dealer), Greenfield, Missouri to Springfield Wagon Company, September 9, 1882, Missouri 1882 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers. The railroad rate problem is reflected in correspondence received from nearly every dealer.

⁴⁵M. L. Sargent, General Freight Agent for Kansas City, Fort Scott and Gulf Railroad, to Springfield Wagon Company, February 5, 1883, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

Most of the wagon lumber in the yard was ruined and the Springfield Wagon Company filed suit against McLaughlin,⁴ asking \$1,000 damages and an injunction to make him return the creek to its original channel. No damages were awarded, but the suit was dismissed at the cost of McLaughlin, who agreed to destroy his earthen dam.

In December, the problem reoccurred. McLaughlin built a stone wall twenty feet long across the creek and the wagon company's lumber yard was again flooded. The owners of the company filed suit again, and the defendant once more agreed to pay court costs and remove his dam. No damages were awarded.⁴⁶ Business at the wagon factory returned to normal, and the company ended 1882 with sales of 1,500 wagons and an organization of about 100 dealers spread over three states and Indian Territory.⁴⁷

⁴⁶Springfield Wagon Company v L. W. McLaughlin, October 26, 1882, Greene County, Missouri Circuit Court Records, cases 4887 & 4888, box 474, book Y, page 280, Greene County Courthouse, Springfield, Missouri.

⁴⁷F. P. Rose, Springfield Wagon Company, p. 99. One indication of the prosperity of the Springfield Wagon Company was the "showplace" home built by Colonel Fellows in 1882. The two-story mansion was located at 729 North Main (then the "elite" area of Springfield), on a spacious, shaded hilltop estate. It had a cut stone foundation and was built of hard white pine, personally selected by Fellows and "rafted" from Wisconsin to St. Louis, then shipped to Springfield by rail. It was said that there was not a knothole in the house. The ceilings were fourteen feet high and the huge double front doors measured ten feet tall. All the interior woodwork was heavy, hand-carved walnut, and the entrance hallway was thirty feet wide and fifty

Early in 1883, a young man named Frank Curran arrived in Springfield from Kentucky. He was a buggy-maker by trade and had plans to open a wholesale buggy agency. Before he could carry out his plans, he became interested in the wagon business (and in one of Colonel Fellows' daughters) and invested his capital in the Springfield Wagon Company.⁴⁸ About the same time, Ezekiel Boyden sold his interest in the firm to Fred A. Wishart, the secretary of the company. John Massey then became superintendent of the factory, and an expansion program quickly got underway.⁴⁹ Sales for February, March, and April, 1883, were double those of the year before, and the company geared up to meet that level of demand. Over 500,000 pounds of freight arrived at the factory during April, and that material was rapidly converted into new Springfield wagons. Carloads of wagons were shipped all over Missouri and into Arkansas, Indian Territory, Kansas, and Texas. The company also began selling cotton wagons in the southern states.⁵⁰

feet long. Fellows' home was the first in Springfield with a telephone, indoor plumbing, and electric lights. For a more detailed description, see "Stately Fellows Home, Soon To Be Hospital, Stirs Reminiscences", Springfield Leader & Press, June 18, 1941, p. 3.

⁴⁸F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company," p. 100.

⁴⁹"The Springfield Wagon Factory," Springfield Daily Herald, May 5, 1883, p. 4.

⁵⁰Ibid.

By May, production capacity was doubled.⁵¹ The Springfield Wagon Company employed 100 workmen in a \$75,000 factory covering five acres, and built 250 wagons each month.⁵² On May 4, the Springfield Daily Herald said of the wagon factory:

"indications are that it (Springfield Wagon Company) will ride high on the tide of prosperity which is just now settling in for Springfield."⁵³

Part of the reason for the widespread popularity of Springfield wagons was the fact that each new model incorporated all the latest improvements in wagon design.⁴ In 1883, the Springfield became the first and only wagon to be equipped with steel tires instead of iron. The new tires wore longer and kept their shape better. The wagon box was also improved in 1883. Iron bars were run lengthways under the bed to provide better support for heavy loads, and an iron bar was fastened across the floor boards at the rear of the bed to prevent separation and breakage.⁵⁴

Not only was the factory expanded and the Springfield wagon improved in 1883, but the dealer organization was reworked also. Frank Curran and J. S. Finley were

⁵¹F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company," p. 100.

⁵²"The Springfield Wagon Factory," Springfield Daily Herald, May 5, 1883, p. 4.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

sent out as traveling agents to work with existing dealers and set up new ones. They also helped open the new sales areas in Texas and the Deep South. To insure a better sales operation, the Springfield Wagon Company began requiring R. G. Dun & Company or Bradstreet Merchantile Agency reports on potential dealers before signing contracts. In addition, the company offered a 4% discount for cash sales and gave agencies a price break of \$4 per wagon when they purchased ten or more at one time.⁵⁵ The new sales procedures proved very successful and more than 2,000 Springfield wagons were sold by October.

Although the Springfield Wagon Company had enjoyed its best year of operation in 1883, it also suffered its worst disaster. At 8 a.m. on Sunday morning, October 28, fire broke out in a defective drying kiln and spread rapidly through the factory. By daylight, the wagon factory was a smoldering ruin. Only the stock of finished wagons was saved.⁵⁶ It seemed unlikely that the Springfield Wagon Company would ever rise from those ashes.

⁵⁵Springfield Wagon Company to Moses Baum (dealer), Walnut, Missouri, October 6, 1883, Missouri 1883 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

⁵⁶"Gone Up In Smoke: Destruction of the Springfield Wagon Factory," Springfield Express, November 2, 1883, p. 2.

CHAPTER IV

The Emergence of a Giant

The fire at the Springfield wagon factory occurred before the company could complete delivery of its fall orders, and it resulted in a net loss of over \$25,000 in buildings, machinery and materials.¹ The total loss from the destruction of the factory was placed at \$45,000. Since the wagon company's insurance amounted to only \$19,250 there seemed little hope that the firm could ever recover from its staggering loss.² Homer F. Fellows and his partners spent the rest of the year exploring possibilities for rebuilding their factory. They received invitations to relocate in Clinton, Missouri, Armourdale, Kansas, and Fort Scott, Kansas, but decided to resume operations in Springfield, if they could.³

¹"Gone Up In Smoke," Springfield Express, November 2, 1883, p. 2.

²See Appendix D.

³Lingle Brothers (proprietors of Henry County Democrat, Clinton, Missouri) to Springfield Wagon Company, November 12, 1883, Missouri 1883 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers. Similar letters from several Fort Scott and Armourdale, Kansas businessmen are in the Kansas folder.

On November 23, 1883, the owners of the Springfield Wagon Company temporarily put aside their problems. In a fashionable double wedding, two of Colonel Fellows' daughters were married. Clara L. Fellows became Mrs. Frank J. Curran and Emma F. Fellows married Charles T. Keet of Springfield.⁴ Both bridegrooms were to serve as officers in the wagon company in later years.

Shortly after the wedding, Fellows learned of the bankruptcy of the White Water Wagon Company of Holly Springs, Mississippi.⁵ He immediately opened negotiations with that company for its equipment and materials and began investigating new sites in Springfield for the wagon factory. On January 13, 1884, the Springfield Daily Herald printed an interview with Colonel Fellows in which he confirmed rumors that the Springfield Wagon Company had decided to rebuild on a more extensive scale than before the fire. He revealed that a new factory would be built where land was inexpensive and readily available. The old site was worth \$15,000 and was too valuable and too small for manufacturing usage. Fellows also announced that the new wagon factory would be steam heated and have electric lighting. Equipment for the factory would be brought

⁴Springfield Express, November 23, 1883, p. 3.

⁵Stevens, Missouri, The Center State, III, 320.

in ten railroad cars from Holly Springs, Mississippi and was the latest and best-built type; worth \$70,000.⁶

Homer F. Fellows had made an agreement with Colonel Robert Skane of Louisville, Kentucky. Skane, the primary creditor of the bankrupt White Water Wagon Company, sold its machinery and materials to the Springfield Wagon Company in return for stock in that firm. This arrangement provided the Springfield factory with more and better equipment than Fellows and his partners could have otherwise purchased. Shortly after closing his negotiations for the White Water Wagon Company, Colonel Fellows remarried, making Matilda Jackson, widow of J. C. Jackson, the new lady of Fellows Mansion.

Following Fellows' announcement of his rebuilding plans, the rival towns of Springfield and North Springfield began competing for the new factory. North Springfield offered the wagon company several acres of land and a \$5,000 bonus to build there.⁷ The City of Springfield responded by offering free land and a \$2,500 donation for construction.⁸ Finally, in June, a compromise was reached and a site was obtained on Jordan Creek at the junction of the Frisco (St. Louis & San Francisco)

⁶"Wagon Works," Springfield Daily Herald, January 13, 1884, p. 3.

⁷"The Wagon Factory," Springfield Daily Herald, April 30, 1884, p. 4.

⁸Ibid., August 14, 1884, p. 2.

and Gulf railroads.⁹ Construction began immediately and the Springfield Wagon Company prepared to resume operations.

Meanwhile, the company was recapitalized and reorganized to permit expansion. On May 28, the board of directors (H. F. Fellows, N. W. Fellows, and F. A. Wishart) voted to increase the authorized stock from \$25,000 to \$50,000. Five hundred shares of stock were authorized at \$100 per share, and the firm listed its paid up capital stock at \$25,000.¹⁰ Having made the necessary arrangements, on October 22, the directors issued \$15,000 in stock to D. McPherson and S. A. Miller of Louisville, Kentucky in behalf of Colonel Skane.¹¹ By this means, the Springfield Wagon Company doubled its capitalization and increased its financial stability before resuming operations.

By December 4, brick work was completed on two factory buildings, and construction on two more was

⁹"The Wagon Factory," Springfield Daily Herald, June 18, 1884, p. 4.

¹⁰Minutes of Stockholders' Meeting of the Springfield Wagon Company, May 28, 1884, photostatic copy, Archives of Missouri Department of State, State Capitol, Jefferson City, Missouri.

¹¹H. F. Fellows to Michael K. McGrath, ALS, October 22, 1884, photostatic copy, Archives of Missouri Department of State, State Capitol, Jefferson City, Missouri.

nearing that stage. The new plant would be ready for the spring market in 1885.¹²

As difficult as 1884 had been for the Springfield Wagon Company, it survived and ultimately benefited from the fire. The Springfield company had escaped the Panic of 1884 which devastated its competitors in the wagon industry. During the year, the sales of Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company alone dropped \$152,000, and several large firms including the White Water Wagon Company failed.¹³ As a result,⁴ the Springfield Wagon Company had been able to take advantage of the White Water Company's bankruptcy, and began 1885 in a spacious, modern factory built at a cost of \$50,000 and equipped with the latest machinery. It was prepared to make an impressive return to the market.¹⁴

Early that spring, as new Springfield wagons once again rolled out of the factory, the management turned to the task of revitalizing its dealer organization. The company had built no wagons during 1884, and some dealers had been caught with no stock at the time of the fire. Consequently, several dealers had

¹²"Springfield Wagon Works," Springfield Daily Herald, December 4, 1884, p. 4.

¹³Longstreet, Century on Wheels, p. 52.

¹⁴"Springfield Wagon Company," Springfield Leader, December 21, 1886, p. 2. (See photos and map of new factory in photo section).

purchased Studebaker, Bain, Mitchell, or other premium wagons to sell until the Springfield brand was once again available. The Panic of 1884 had forced the big wagon builders to reduce prices; therefore, when Springfield wagons reappeared on the market, they faced stiff price competition.¹⁵

The Springfield Wagon Company acted in several ways to reactivate and aid its dealers. It placed advertisements in newspapers all over its trade area announcing the return of Springfield wagons. New advertising boards, signs, and handbills were furnished to dealers and the company offered to accept ninety-day notes from customers when endorsed by an authorized sales agency.¹⁶ These new notes, made out on forms furnished by the company, permitted dealers to make time sales of short duration and to collect more rapidly than under previous time sale agreements. In return for these sales aids, the company required its dealers to sign new contracts promising to sell Springfield wagons exclusively. Frank Curran resumed his job as traveling sales agent and was joined by James W. Walls. As factory representatives, these two men worked

¹⁵Buffalo Hardware Company (dealer), Buffalo, Missouri to Springfield Wagon Company, September 15, 1885, Missouri 1885 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers. Similar letters from many dealers are contained in this folder.

¹⁶W. A. Peel (dealer), Avoca, Arkansas to Springfield Wagon Company, ALS, December 17, 1885, Arkansas 1885 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

closely with Springfield wagon dealers during 1885, and established many new dealerships in Missouri and Arkansas.¹⁷

The company also aided its dealers by expanding its line of wagons. The mining and quarrying industries were developing on a large scale in Missouri, Arkansas, and the Southwest during the 1880's, and companies engaging in these operations needed heavy ore wagons to haul their products to the railroads. Taking advantage of this new market, the Springfield Wagon Company designed huge ore wagons capable of carrying as much as three tons of cargo. These wagons quickly won acceptance and popularity among the area's mining companies, and the resulting sales helped revitalize the dealer system.¹⁸

The first year in the new factory was a tremendous success. The dealer organization had been greatly strengthened through the new advertising and

¹⁷James W. Walls to Springfield Wagon Company, ALS, November 28, 1885, Arkansas 1885 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers. This letter contains a field report on new dealers set up and sales to old dealers.

¹⁸The Arkansas 1885 folder in the Springfield Wagon Company Papers contains many sales slips, shipping tickets and letters concerning ore wagons for mines, quarries, and associated businesses in that state. Some were even used for hauling slabs of slate (see correspondence with J. G. Wallis of Benton, Arkansas). A catalog print of the Springfield ore wagon appears in the photo section of this work.

time sales plan, sales had reached \$47,000 (5,000 wagons), and another new type of wagon had been added to the line.¹⁹ As 1886 began, the management looked toward new areas for expansion.

In February, Colonel Fellows supplied the United States Department of the Interior with a complete description of the Springfield farm and road wagon, and subsequently, got an opportunity to bid on purchases of wagons through the Office of Indian Affairs. After that time, the company often shipped wagons into Arizona, Colorado, Dakota, Nebraska, and Utah for government use on Indian reservations.²⁰

In addition to sales on government contracts, the Springfield Wagon Company worked hard at consolidating gains made the year before in its dealer organization. Springfield wagon dealers encountered fierce price-cutting competition again in 1886, as some of the "big name" brands began selling at \$50; \$15 under the market price for Springfields. Bain, Milburn, Mitchell, and Studebaker wagons were among those

¹⁹Monthly and annual sales figures (1884-89) compiled by Secretary Fred A. Wishart, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

²⁰I. D. C. Atkins, Commissioner of Office of Indian Affairs, to H. F. Fellows, ALS, February 20, 1886, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

offered at greatly reduced prices.²¹ The Studebaker Manufacturing Company began consigning wagons to dealers for a twelve month period at 8% interest and allowing the dealer an additional twelve months to pay after the sale of a wagon.²²

This time, the Springfield Wagon Company did not react by cutting prices to meet its competitors. Instead of attempting to compete on a price basis, the Springfield company concentrated upon advertising the quality of its wagons, selling them as superior vehicles, worthy of a higher price. This appeal was greatly enhanced by the widespread success of Springfield wagons in county fairs during 1886. One of the most notable of these victories in judged competition occurred at the Fort Smith, Arkansas Fair. On October 18, a Springfield won the blue ribbon for the best two-horse wagon, and became the first wagon in seven years to defeat the Mitchell for that award.²³

²¹Magruder & McAdams (dealer), Bentonville, Arkansas to Springfield Wagon Company, June 2, 1886, Arkansas 1886 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers. Also see J. D. Rainey & Company (dealer), Bolivar, Missouri to Springfield Wagon Company, June 20, 1886, and Sanders, Russell & Company (dealer), Billings, Missouri to Springfield Wagon Company, June 22, 1886, last two letters cited are in Missouri 1886 folder in Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

²²Buffalo Hardware Company (dealer), Buffalo, Missouri to Springfield Wagon Company, March 15, 1886, Missouri 1886 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

²³Sengel & Schulte (dealer), Fort Smith, Arkansas to Springfield Wagon Company, October 18, 1886, Arkansas 1886 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers. Wagons

New sales techniques accompanied the Springfield Wagon Company's new approach. The company distributed printed mail order forms to its dealers and put \$5 worth of advertising in local newspapers for those dealers requesting it. In addition, Springfield wagon dealers were authorized to accept time-sale notes of eight months maximum duration. This extension of the approved time-sale period allowed dealers to sell more wagons and gave them the added advantage of collecting 10% interest for an additional two months.²⁴

The company's refusal to cut prices was a gamble, but it paid off. Springfield wagons became known for their quality and sold readily in competition with lower priced wagons built by the eastern factories. One dealer, Magruder & McAdams of Bentonville, Arkansas, wrote to the factory that Springfield wagons were giving universal satisfaction and that, although there were

were usually tested in two ways at county fairs. Wheels and axles were tested for strength by loading the competing wagons with increasingly heavy, pre-weighed loads until cracks or separations appeared in the parts being tested. The wagon standing the greatest load was the winner. To test ease of running, competing wagons were loaded with cargoes of equal weight, then either pulled over the same terrain by teams of approximately equal strength or allowed to roll freely down an incline. The winner was, of course, the wagon which traveled the prescribed distance the quickest and with least friction.

²⁴Buffalo Hardware Company (dealer), Buffalo, Missouri to Springfield Wagon Company, August 21, 1886, Missouri 1886 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

plenty of wagons selling for \$50, the cheaper wagons gave Springfield dealers "little bother".²⁵

By the end of the year, the Springfield Wagon Company had repeated its feat of the year before; selling 5,000 wagons in its trade area of Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Indian Territory; more than any other brand. As of December 21, 1886, the Springfield was the highest priced wagon on the market and had become one of the "big name" brands.²⁶

The new sales approach was not the only innovation by the Springfield Wagon Company in 1886. Homer F. Fellows was always fascinated by new ideas for industrial improvement. The Knights of Labor were proposing the eight-hour workday at that time, and experiments were going on in Chicago and other large cities to test the feasibility of such an arrangement. Colonel Fellows became interested in the eight-hour proposal and, although his wagon factory was not unionized, he put the shorter workday into effect. The trial period was so successful that the company adopted the new hours permanently, while continuing

²⁵Magruder & McAdams (dealer), Bentonville, Arkansas to Springfield Wagon Company, June 2, 1886, Arkansas 1886 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

²⁶"Springfield Wagon Company," Springfield Leader, December 21, 1886, p. 2.

to pay its 100 workmen for ten hours¹ work per day!²⁷ It was this type of treatment which encouraged the excellent craftsmanship for which the Springfield wagon builders were famous.

Having built a reputation for quality products and honest business practices, in 1887, the Springfield Wagon Company came under pressure to change. After a period of rapid growth during the 1870's and early 1880's,³ the wagon industry began developing toward a monopoly. In 1886,⁴ several of the large eastern manufacturers had formed the National Wagon Manufacturers Association of the U.S.A. This organization acted as a trade association with the object of enabling its members to use their combined economic power to standardize prices, finance charges, terms of sale, and discounts.²⁸ This economic power was considerable since the association included several firms such as Studebaker, whose 1887 sales alone exceeded \$2,000,000.²⁹ Non-members were pressured to join and to adopt prices and regulations established by the group. In this way, the trade

²⁷"Springfield's Pride," Springfield Leader, April 30, 1886, p. 4. Colonel Fellows ran for Congress on the Greenbacker ticket in 1886, and his liberal ideas in regard to industrial conditions and attitudes toward labor won him strong support from the Knights of Labor.

²⁸National Wagon Manufacturers' Association of the U.S.A. to Springfield Wagon Company, January 4, 1887, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

²⁹Longstreet, Century on Wheels, p. 52.

association hoped to raise wagon prices by agreement among the manufacturers while reducing the cost of competition among them. Many of the nation's largest wagon companies joined the trade group, and its leadership included officials of the Bain, Schuttler, and Studebaker firms. Although the Springfield Wagon Company received several letters of invitation to membership, Colonel Fellows and his partners refused to join the Association.³⁰ They apparently believed that the names and good will of member firms were being dishonestly exploited in an attempt to form a cartel or syndicate.³¹ This refusal led to a confrontation; a test of the ability of the Springfield company to withstand the combined pressures exerted by its competitors.

The Springfield Wagon Company began the test of strength determined to maintain a market price of \$64 on its farm and road wagons and to continue its policy of warranting all Springfield wagons.³² At first, it seemed as though the trade association would overpower the Springfield firm and force it to conform. Carloads

³⁰National Wagon Manufacturers' Association of the U.S.A. to Springfield Wagon Company, January 4-December 15, 1887; Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

³¹Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, I, 677.

³²Springfield Wagon Company mail order forms used by dealers included a copy of the warranty and stated flatly that no below-price orders would be accepted. See mail order forms in Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

of cheap wagons flooded the Missouri and Arkansas markets, cutting into the sales of Springfield's dealers. Harrison, Milburn, Fish Brothers, Tennessee, and Olds wagons were offered to dealers at prices as low as \$47.50, as compared to the \$55 dealer price for Springfields.³³ The Springfield Wagon Company met this competition with a renewed effort to improve its dealer organization. To protect itself, the company bound dealers to account for all wagons on consignment as soon as they were sold, either in cash or with good notes. The dealer received no commission until notes or contracts were paid in full. In return, the Springfield Wagon Company guaranteed its dealers a 10% profit on all wagons sold and a 10% commission for any other services as agents.³⁴ The company also offered to personalize wagons for dealers by painting "Sold and Warranted by (dealer's name)" on them when requested.³⁵

³³G. C. Rhodes (dealer), Harrison, Arkansas to Springfield Wagon Company, June 25-August 17, 1887, Arkansas 1887 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers. Rhodes reported stiff competition from Harrison, Milburn, Fish Brothers, and Tennessee wagons in his letters. Frank Curran went to Arkansas to investigate and found those brands, as well as Olds, selling as low as \$47.50. He reported his findings to the company by letter on August 23, 1887. (Arkansas 1887 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers).

³⁴Contract with Burdette & Baldwin (dealer), Forsyth, Missouri, May 23, 1887, Missouri 1887 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

³⁵Woodbridge Anable Dry Goods (dealer), Seligman, Missouri to Springfield Wagon Company, August 17, 1887, Missouri 1887 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

The Springfield Wagon Company offered its dealers the largest selection of wagon sizes and types in the industry. The size, or cargo capacity, of a wagon was determined by the diameter of the skein. The greater the diameter of the skein, the heavier the axle and wheels and, the heavier the load that could be carried.³⁶ By 1887, Springfield farm and road wagons were available with skeins in 2 1/2", 2 3/4", 3", 3 1/4", and 3 1/2" sizes. These wagons were all of the same design, but they varied in size of wheels, axles, and boxes (beds). The dealer could offer less expensive Springfields for light use or more expensive Springfields for heavy hauling. This flexibility greatly increased the ability of a Springfield dealer to sell in competition with other brands. In addition, the dealer could sell his wagons with confidence that they would haul heavier loads than other wagons of the same skein size. This was because Springfields were always equipped with hubs, skeins, and axles of the next size larger (i.e., a 3" Springfield had the wheels and running gear of a 3 1/4" wagon).³⁷ Besides regular farm and road wagons, Spring-

³⁶Condron, "Knapheide Wagon Company," p. 35. The diameter of a skein was measured at the point where the inside of the hub of the wheel fitted against the end of the axle. A ridge or "collar" around the skein kept the wheel in place from the inside while a nut held it from the outside.

³⁷Interview with F. F. Stice, (Manager of the Springfield Wagon Company, 1941-1952), October 28, 1971, on tape in authors possession-copy in Springfield Wagon Company collection.

field dealers also sold ore wagons, flat-beds, and log wagons. Special ore and log wagons were available with 5" skeins and wheels up to six inches wide. These huge vehicles sold for as much as \$210, and could carry more than four tons of cargo.³⁸

The Springfield Wagon Company's careful attention to its dealer system and expansion of its line of wagons during 1887 brought gratifying results. Springfield dealers were able to compete successfully with dealers for other brands, and the company withstood all attempts by the trade association to force compliance with its prices and regulations.

One of the reasons why the Springfield wagon remained competitive on the market was its success at the county fairs. The Springfield had won premiums for the best two-horse farm wagon and best two-horse road wagon at the Springfield, Missouri Fair in both 1886 and 1887. Confusion arose after the fair in 1887 when some Studebaker dealers began claiming that their wagon had won the two-horse premiums at that year's judging. In an open letter carried in Springfield and area newspapers, Colonel Fellows wrote to Pumphrey & Cantrell, his dealers in Lead Hill, Arkansas, and set the record straight. He recounted how the Springfield Wagon Company had taken the two-horse wagon awards at the 1886

³⁸See catalog photos and information concerning ore and log wagons in photo section.

fair, and said that, afterward, the Studebaker agent remarked that his company would rather loose anything than the wagon premiums. Fellows further reported that the Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company had sent three wagons to be shown in the 1887 fair, but had declined to enter after seeing the Springfield wagons displayed. He remarked that although that decision had been cowardly, it had saved Studebaker a defeat. In a resounding conclusion, Fellows announced that the Springfield company did not

"want to be misunderstood as competing with the Studebaker wagon, for when we have to resort to long time loans and such falsehoods to sell inferior wagons for first class wagons, we will quit the trade."³⁹

Although price cutting by competitors reduced its sales during 1887, the Springfield Wagon Company maintained its reputation for quality and ended the year with gross sales of \$200,000 (4,000 wagons).⁴⁰

As 1888 began, the Southern Wagon Manufacturers Association invited the Springfield company to become a member. This trade group was composed primarily of wagon companies manufacturing or selling in the southern

³⁹"False Rumor," public letter to Pumphrey & Cantrell (dealer), Lead Hill, Arkansas from the Springfield Wagon Company, October 17, 1887, newspaper clippings, Public Libraries of Springfield and Greene County-Main Branch, Springfield, Missouri.

⁴⁰Springfield Missouri, Its Commerce, Its Industries, and Its Live Men. (Kansas City, Missouri: Commercial News, 1890), p. 32.

states. Like the National Wagon Manufacturers Association, this organization was attempting to set prices, standardize wagons, and reduce price-cutting competition among its members. In addition, the Southern Wagon Manufacturers Association was determined to reduce the warranty period for new wagons to six months or less.⁴¹ The Springfield company refused to join this trade group just as it had declined membership in the National Association the year before. By doing so, Homer F. Fellows and his partners made still more enemies in the industry and assured themselves of even tougher competition in the coming season.

In anticipation of the impending price war, the Springfield Wagon Company reduced the dealer price of its small wagons (2 1/2" skein size) to \$48.⁴² This move was intended to give Springfield dealers greater flexibility in competition with cheap wagons. No other major change was made in the sales program during 1888. The spring and summer sales season was highly competitive as member firms of the large trade associations battled the Springfield Wagon Company for supremacy in the Southwestern Markets. By fall, letters streamed in

⁴¹Southern Wagon Manufacturers Association to Springfield Wagon Company, April 4, 1888, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

⁴²Springfield Wagon Company to H. I. Seidel (dealer), Eureka Springs, Arkansas, October 19, 1888, Arkansas 1888 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

from dealers all over that trade area, reporting that the Springfield was the most popular wagon offered in Missouri, Arkansas, and the Southwestern states and territories.⁴³

One reason for the popularity of the Springfield wagon was its durability. Because of its proximity to vast hardwood supplies, the Springfield factory was able to purchase huge quantities of select materials at low prices and with little freight cost.⁴⁴ This enabled the company to build its wagons from the finest materials while keeping its prices competitive. Eastern manufacturers, by comparison, were located further from substantial hardwood regions and, having exploited local supplies of hardwood years before, had to transport their materials long distances by rail. To offset freight costs, many of these factories used cheaper types and grades of lumber. Thus, when Springfield wagons were compared with other brands, they were usually recognized as sturdier vehicles. As a result, the Springfield won a reputation of a "premium" wagon.⁴⁵

⁴³The "Southwestern markets" included Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Texas, Indian Territory, and New Mexico Territory.

⁴⁴See locations of lumber suppliers listed in Appendix A.

⁴⁵"Springfield Wagon Company Notes," Springfield Daily Herald, September 6, 1888, p. 3.

Another reason for the success of the Springfield factory was its location in regard to its sales markets.⁴⁶ Although some Springfield wagons were sold in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana, most were sold in the "Southwestern Markets".⁴⁶ The Springfield factory was much closer than its competitors to these areas, thus, Springfield wagons cost the customer from \$4 to \$8 less for freight than other brands. This savings in freight costs helped offset the price advantage of cheaper wagons built in eastern factories.⁴⁷

In September, 1888, the Springfield Wagon Company began publishing a series of short articles in the Springfield Daily Herald. These articles, entitled "Springfield Wagon Company Notes," were used for advertising purposes and carried daily accounts of events and business at the wagon factory. On September 4, the company proudly reported that it was six carloads behind on orders for Indian Territory alone, and invited visitors to tour the factory and watch the workmen build Springfield wagons.⁴⁸ Three days later, the "Notes" announced the sale of 150 wagons on one order for Harrison, Arkansas.⁴⁹

⁴⁶See footnote 43 for a definition of "Southwestern Markets".

⁴⁷"Springfield Wagon Company Notes," Springfield Daily Herald, September 6, 1888, p. 8.

⁴⁸Ibid., September 4, 1888, p. 2.

⁴⁹Ibid., September 7, 1888, p. 8.

The "Springfield Wagon Company Notes" continued reporting the firm's progress through September, as the Springfield became the largest selling wagon in its trade area.⁵⁰ In addition to increased sales, the Springfield wagon scored victories over its competitors in judging at every fair in southwest Missouri during 1888.⁵¹ Springfield wagons were usually displayed in various stages of completion at these events. An unpainted running gear (wagon without bed), a complete unpainted wagon, and a finished wagon were shown. This exhibit enabled viewers to examine the materials as well as the craftsmanship which went into a Springfield wagon.⁵²

By the end of the year, sales exceeded \$200,000 and the company publicly announced that it expected its business to double in 1889.⁵³ Mining companies, railroad contractors, and lumbering interests in Missouri, Arkansas, and Indian Territory were using Springfield wagons almost exclusively.⁵⁴ As a result, the factory was expanding faster than any other wagon factory west

⁵⁰"Springfield Wagon Company Notes," Springfield Daily Herald, September 5, 1888, p. 2.

⁵¹Ibid., September 25, 1888, p. 3.

⁵²"The Springfield Wagon," Springfield Daily Herald, September 19, 1888, p. 8. [reprinted from Fort Scott Monitor (Kansas)].

⁵³"Springfield Wagon Company Notes," Springfield Daily Herald, September 11, 1888, p. 2.

⁵⁴Ibid.

of the Mississippi River.⁵⁵ Colonel Fellows and his partners were so confident of the superiority of their wagon that they reissued the famous "\$500 Challenge" at the end of 1888. None of their competitors accepted!⁵⁶

The Springfield Wagon Company did not resolve its problems with the trade associations during 1888, but it did achieve predominance in the Southwestern markets and demonstrated that it could not be coerced by competitors. By 1889, the Springfield company was well established as one of the nation's foremost wagon builders.

Expansion and prosperity continued unabated during 1889. That year, the Springfield Wagon Company absorbed one of its small competitors; the Pittsburg Agricultural Works of Pittsburg, Kansas. The Pittsburg wagon factory ceased operations in February, and its machinery and materials were moved to Springfield.⁵⁷ By means of purchases such as this, the Springfield company eliminated several of its smaller, nearby competitors.

⁵⁵"Springfield Wagon Company Notes," Springfield Daily Herald, September 12, 1888, p. 3.

⁵⁶Ibid., September 8, 1888, p. 4.

⁵⁷J. C. Hooper to Springfield Wagon Company, ALS, February 26, 1889, Missouri 1889 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

Other competition, however, remained. The Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company of South Bend, Indiana, was building thousands of buggies, carriages, and wagons in a factory covering 100 acres, and was retailing its wagons for \$55 in the Southwestern states.⁵⁸ Olds wagons were selling for \$60, and some brands, such as Labelle, had market prices as low as \$48.⁵⁹ These prices all undercut the \$65 market price of the Springfield wagon, and the past three years of price cutting by competitors had cut into the sales of Springfield dealers. Although the company had continued to prosper, new ways of helping dealers were needed in 1889, if the sales organization was to survive.

The company responded to the needs of its dealers in several ways. First, it opened a new advertising campaign. Bestowing a nickname, "The Old Reliable", on its wagons, it distributed post cards and lithographs graphically depicting the superiority of "The Old Reliable" Springfield wagon to other brands.⁶⁰ New markets were opened up by the construction of wagons to

⁵⁸Longstreet, Century on Wheels, p. 54.

⁵⁹Magruder & McAdams (dealer), Bentonville, Arkansas to Springfield Wagon Company, September 13, 1889, Arkansas 1889 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

⁶⁰"The Old Reliable" slogan first appeared in the Springfield Express, March 15, 1889. A copy of one of the lithographs used in the 1889 advertising campaign appears in the photo section of this work.

suit special uses. The Springfield Wagon Company began building railroad baggage wagons, and "sawdust carts" for use in lumber mills. One of the most unusual wagons built by the company during 1889 was a medicine wagon for Hoyl & Prophet, Snakebite Medicine Manufacturers of Bois D'Arc, Missouri.⁶¹ The company also introduced a new low priced farm wagon called the Chicopee, built from the same design as the Springfield farm and road wagon but constructed of cheaper materials and painted differently. It cost the dealers \$45 and enabled them to meet the demand for cheap wagons while maintaining the market price of the Springfield.⁶²

"The Old Reliable" campaign proved successful, and the Springfield Wagon Company enjoyed excellent business in 1889. In September, further improvements were made in the factory. A new electrical lighting system, complete with its own dynamo, was installed at a cost of \$1,000.⁶³ In March 1890 the Springfield

⁶¹Hoyl & Prophet Snakebite Medicine Manufacturers, Bois D'Arc, Missouri to Springfield Wagon Company, May 5, 1889, Missouri 1889 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

⁶²Archer, Daniel & Company (dealer), Mammoth Springs, Arkansas to Springfield Wagon Company, July 25, 1889, Arkansas 1889 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

⁶³H. B. Warden (Sprague Warden Electric Company), to Springfield Wagon Company, September 14, 1889, Missouri 1889 folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

wagon factory was the largest manufacturer in the city, both in capital (\$75,000) and productivity.⁶⁴ In addition to its already extensive line, the factory began producing "oil gears" during 1889. These were wagons with heavy running gears and flat beds, used for hauling boilers, well pipes, derrick lumber, and other materials in the oil fields. Springfield "oil gears" soon became extremely popular and were used extensively in Indian Territory and Texas.⁶⁵

Problems of competition continued in 1890, but one major issue was settled. For some time the Studebaker company had contended that it held a patent on the use of steel skeins on wagons. Since the only alternative to the steel skein was the inferior cast iron skein, Studebaker's competitors vigorously denied this claim. Among the other premium wagons equipped with steel skeins was the Springfield. Finally, Studebaker filed suit in a Chicago court to force recognition of its patent. The patent, however, was found to be "null and void" and "worthless", thus clearing all other manufacturers from any liability for past use of steel skeins. This court decision removed another obstacle

⁶⁴"Board of Trade," Springfield Weekly Leader, February 14, 1890, p. 1.

⁶⁵"The Springfields Keep Rolling Along," Esso Oilways, January, 1945, p. 3.

to free competition and settled a long standing dispute among wagon manufacturers.⁶⁶

The year ended rather uneventfully, but the Springfield Wagon Company did retain its strongly competitive position in the wagon trade and even sold its old factory site for \$25,000.⁶⁷

The next year was one of continuing growth and prosperity for the Springfield Wagon Company. In January the company listed its own value at \$150,000 and its officers predicted a record year.⁶⁸ The spring sales season of 1891 was one of the finest in the firm's history and, by May, the factory was turning out 250 Springfield wagons monthly. On May 28, a reporter for the Springfield Democrat toured the wagon works with Colonel Fellows. There he saw tremendous stocks of materials; enough, he said, to build 7,000 wagons. Fellows proudly discussed a new type of steel tire to be used on future Springfield wagons and estimated that production for 1891 would surpass the previous year by at least 700 wagons.⁶⁹ The reporter also talked with the factory's

⁶⁶S. B. Parsons (Sandage Steel Skein Company), to Springfield Wagon Company, ALS, April 28, 1890, Indiana folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

⁶⁷Springfield Democrat, November 16, 1890, p. 3.

⁶⁸"\$1,302,576," Springfield Democrat, January 2, 1891, p. 3.

⁶⁹"The Springfield Wagon," Springfield Democrat, May 29, 1891, p. 3.

skilled craftsmen, some of whom had built Springfield wagons for seventeen years. These men and their superintendent, L. J. Murphy, expressed great confidence in the future of the Springfield Wagon Company and equal pride in the quality of its products.⁷⁰ Their confidence and pride proved to be well founded, as the Springfield Wagon Company continued to expand and prosper through 1891 and into 1892.

During the last six months of 1892, sales slumped and expansion halted. The nation's economy, strained by industrial overexpansion and rampant speculation, became shaky, and demand for agricultural equipment such as wagons dropped sharply. The Springfield Wagon Company experienced its poorest year since resuming operations; selling only 2,539 wagons.⁷¹ The recession was widespread among large wagon builders, and some of them went out of business. In fact, economic conditions in the agricultural equipment industry had been worsening since the late 1880's. Between 1880 and 1890, half of the manufacturers of agricultural implements had ceased operations. Many of the surviving firms had joined trade associations in hopes of maintaining adequate

⁷⁰"The Springfield Wagon," Springfield Democrat, May 29, 1891, p. 3.

⁷¹Sales Journal, 1893, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

profits through control of production and prices.⁷²

This was the situation which had developed in the wagon trade.

In December, 1892, the National Wagon Manufacturers Association issued a plea to all the major wagon-builders to help "eradicate some, at least, of the many evils which have crept into the wagon business...."⁷³ This was not an attempt to pressure non-members to join the trade association; it was an urgent request for ideas to help save the industry. The big wagon manufacturers were asked to contribute proposals for standardization of wagon sizes, elimination of inferior wagons, prevention of savage price-cutting, and enforcement of warranties. By taking these steps, the Association hoped to revitalize the wagon business. It had become apparent that even price and sales quota agreements could not assure profits while flagrant abuses of warranties and production of inferior wagons continued.

Apparently, Colonel Fellows and his partners realized that positive, concerted action was necessary to save the industry. The Springfield Wagon Company still refused to conform to the Association's set prices,

⁷²Richard Hofstadter, William Miller and Daniel Aaron, The Structure of American History, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1964), p. 244.

⁷³H. M. Kinney, (Secretary, National Wagon Manufacturers Association) to Springfield Wagon Company, December 1, 1892, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

but Fellows did attend a special wagon manufacturers conference held in Chicago in April, 1893.⁷⁴ There, he presented his views and took part in discussions on setting minimum quality standards for the wagon industry. Participants in that meeting agreed to standardize wagon wheel sizes and track widths by January 1, 1895 and to continue submitting ideas for betterment of the industry to the Association.⁷⁵

Although no sweeping decisions had been reached, after the 1893 conference much of the ill feeling between Association members and non-members subsided. The Springfield Wagon Company and the National Wagon Manufacturers Association temporarily ended their feud, and every major wagon builder concentrated upon survival in a declining market.

To increase its sales, the Springfield Wagon Company added more field representatives. J. H. Quigley joined Frank Curran and James Walls in the Missouri-Arkansas-Kansas area, and S. S. Perry of Fort Worth, Texas was assigned Texas and Indian Territory.⁷⁶ These men traveled over long routes, visiting Springfield

⁷⁴H. F. Fellows to Fred A. Wishart, ALS, December 12, 1892, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

⁷⁵H. M. Kinney to Springfield Wagon Company, April 25, 1893, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

⁷⁶See weekly "Settlement" sheets mailed to the factory by field representatives, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

dealers periodically in an effort to boost sales and morale in the organization.

Business did improve in some sales areas during the spring of 1893, when the Cherokee indians sold a part of their territory to the United States Government. That area, known as the "Cherokee Strip" was located along the northwest border of Arkansas in what is now northeastern Oklahoma. As the Cherokees began receiving payments for the land, they started purchasing wagons in great quantities. The Springfield wagon became particularly popular with the Cherokees and, by late April, carloads of new Springfields were rolling into Indian Territory.⁷⁷ For a time, the factory received orders for all the wagons it could supply.⁷⁸

Just as prosperity seemed to have returned to the Springfield Wagon Company, the nation was rocked by another great financial panic. Railroads, banks, and industry were devastated as the economic bubble of over-expansion and wild speculation broke. Thousands of banks and businesses failed between April and October. Millions of workers were laid off and strikes and lockouts followed as a general industrial depression set in.

⁷⁷Fisher Merchantile Company (dealer), Checotah, I. T., to Springfield Wagon Company, April 2, 1893, Indian Territory folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

⁷⁸Springfield Wagon Company to J. W. Stroud, Stroud, I. T., March 28, 1893, Indian Territory folder, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

This depression was particularly damaging to the wagon industry. Many of the marginal firms and several large companies were ruined. Even among the few large wagon builders remaining in business, conditions were very bad. During the summer, Studebaker was forced to close its factory for five weeks and had to borrow money to reopen. When operations resumed at South Bend, wages were cut and the resulting worker unrest ended in series of strikes.⁷⁹ The Springfield Wagon Company was also hurt by the panic, but kept operating.

Later that year, the "Cherokee Strip" was opened to homesteaders. This event saved the Springfield company from possible ruin. Settlers gathered in southeastern Kansas, southwest Missouri, and northwest Arkansas purchasing wagons and provisions in preparation for the land rush scheduled for September 16. When that day arrived, 50,000 homesteaders staked claims in the "Cherokee Strip," and many of their families arrived in Springfield wagons. The business year ended with moderate success as the Springfield Wagon Company sold 3,399 wagons as compared to 2,539 the year before.⁸⁰

Toward the end of 1893, Colonel H. F. Fellows' health began to fail, and he called his only son, Homer Franklin Fellows, home from St. Louis to learn the wagon

⁷⁹Longstreet, Century on Wheels, pp. 58-60.

⁸⁰Sales Journal, 1893, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

business.⁸¹ Young H. "Frank" Fellows had been born in 1873 and had worked in the Springfield wagon factory as a boy, when not attending school.⁸² While still in his teens, he had spent some time in Indian Territory working cattle with Will Rogers.⁸³ At eighteen, he had gone to St. Louis where he worked as a billing clerk for the Frisco Railroad at a salary of \$125 per week.⁸⁴

At his father's insistence, young Frank Fellows returned to Springfield late in 1893 and took a job as a laborer in the wagon factory at a wage of 11 cents per hour.⁸⁵ He learned the business from the ground up; working at each job in the factory until he had mastered it, then moving on to the next job. In a short time, Frank Fellows was a competent wagon builder in his own right.

The next step was learning how to run the Springfield Wagon Company. Homer F. Fellows, who was gravely ill with a bleeding ulcer, spent 1894 teaching his son the managerial skills needed to operate the business.

⁸¹Newspaper clippings #1819, Public Libraries of Springfield and Greene County-Main Branch, Springfield, Missouri.

⁸²F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company," p. 100.

⁸³Interview with Bill Gott (Springfield Wagon Company Shipping Manager, 1921-52), October 28, 1971, on tape in author's possession-copy in Springfield Wagon Company collection.

⁸⁴Newspaper clippings #1819.

⁸⁵Ibid.

In addition, he worked out a precise plan by which the wagon factory could continue operating under skilled management after his own death until young Frank was ready to take control.

On November 10, 1894 Homer Franklin Fellows died, and the Springfield Wagon Company came to the end of an era.

Colonel H. F. Fellows had once said of himself;

"If I have any monument to leave behind me of which I think my posterity may feel proud, it is this-- that I have always been true in advocating the convictions of my mind and never ashamed or afraid to assume the responsibility."⁸⁶

He had left another monument; the Springfield Wagon Company. Colonel Fellows had guided the company through its early, turbulent years and had established it as the largest wagon company west of the Mississippi River. His son would soon take the reins and lead "The Old Reliable" into the twentieth century.

⁸⁶H. F. Fellows, interview, Springfield Daily Herald, October 20, 1887, p. 3.

CHAPTER V

"The Old Reliable" Rolls On

After Colonel Fellows' death, Norris W. Fellows became president and reorganized the Springfield Wagon Company according to his brother's instructions. Frank Fellows assumed the office of vice-president and continued his preparation for management of the company. Fred A. Wishart remained as secretary while Frank Curran became treasurer; succeeding Charles J. Keet, who had died in 1891. Norris Fellows, Wishart, and Curran were to train Frank Fellows for a period of five years, after which young Fellows would become president.¹

The company operated smoothly under its new management and began making a recovery from the depression. By late 1895, the wagon-building industry was again prospering. The few large firms which had survived the panic returned to full production. Studebaker resumed regular operations and its orders soon exceeded pre-panic levels.² The Springfield Wagon Company also resumed full-scale operations and, by November 1, employed a work force of

¹F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company," p. 101.

²Longstreet, Century on Wheels, pp. 60-61

100 men, building twenty-five wagons daily. During 1895, the company opened new market areas in Mexico and South America where premium hardwood wagons were in short supply. Sales approached pre-panic levels as the company sold 3,500 wagons that year.³

After guiding the wagon company through a second successful year, Norris W. Fellows retired in December, 1896, and sold his interest to Charles A. McCann, a prominent Springfield businessman.⁴ McCann succeeded him as president of the firm with the understanding that Frank Fellows would assume that office in 1901. About the same time, Fred Wishart retired after many years of service, and Frank Curran became secretary-treasurer. Sales reached a record 5,000 wagons as the company continued to prosper in 1897.⁵

In 1898, the Springfield Wagon Company found an adequate and dependable source of hardwood wagon parts; the J. H. Phipps Lumber Company of St. Paul, Arkansas. The Phipps company, which later moved to Fayetteville, Arkansas, was able to supply huge quantities of fine

³"Without a Rival, Springfield, Queen of the Ozarks," Springfield Leader-Democrat (annual souvenir edition), November 1, 1895, p. 3.

⁴Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, I, 738.

⁵"Springfield's Factories," Springfield Leader-Democrat, October 9, 1897, p. 4.

quality spokes, felloes, bolsters and other parts on a regular basis.⁶ This relieved the Springfield company of the need to search for supplies of hardwood for parts and enabled the management to concentrate on sales and production.

One of the ways in which the Springfield Wagon Company expanded during 1898 was through the addition of more field representatives to work with dealers. When Frank Curran became secretary-treasurer, he also assumed the duties of sales manager. Since Curran's added responsibilities required his constant presence at the factory, he hired several new men to operate in his place as traveling sales agents. One of these men was Homer Fellows McElhany, the eldest son of Robert L. McElhany, who was named in honor of Colonel H. F. Fellows.⁷ McElhany was twenty-eight years old when he took the job as the company's regular agent for Indian Territory. Traveling weekly routes through various parts of his sales area, he called on dealers and customers and reported on the wagon trade in Indian Territory.⁸

⁶F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company," p. 96.

⁷William Kearney Hall, comp., Springfield and Greene County, Missouri Inhabitants in 1880, (St. Louis, Missouri: Doctor's Building, 100 N. Euclid Ave.).

⁸Homer McElhany's weekly sales report books, 1898, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

On Monday, he appeared at the factory and received his instructions for the week as well as expense money. Early on Tuesday morning, McElhany boarded a train at the Springfield depot, bound for Indian Territory.⁹ The following excerpt from one of his weekly report books illustrates a week in the life of a Springfield Wagon Company sales agent.

Tuesday, May 17, 1898

Left Springfield by train-6:15 a.m.
Arrived in Vinita, I. T.-2:30 p.m.
Breakfast - Monett, Mo. - \$.75
Dinner - Vinita, I. T. .50
Supper - Vinita, I. T. .50
Bed - Vinita, I. T. .50
Omnibus .25

Total day's expense \$2.50

Wednesday, May 18, 1898

Left Vinita, I.T.-11:36 a.m.
Arrived in Claremore, I.T.-6:00 p.m.
Breakfast - Vinita, I.T. \$.50
Dinner - Chelsea, I.T. .25
Supper - Claremore, I.T. .25
Bed - Catoosa, I.T. .25
Livery - Chelsea, Foyil, Claremore 2.50
Feed and Driver's supper .50

Total day's expense \$4.25

Report for the day.

(Wyandotte, I.T.)-
Sold to Darrough & Co.
2 - 3" wagons @\$50.00
1 - 3½" wagon @\$51.00
(Fairland, I. T.)-
F. M. Connor & Co.
has on hand one car
of Bain and Weber
wagons.

Total sales \$151.00

Report for the day.

(Chelsea, I.T.)-Sold
to McMillan & McIntosh.
2 - 3" wagons @\$50.00
8 - 3½" wagons @51.00
(Foyil, I.T.)- Sold
to A. Foyil
4 - 3" wagons @\$50.00
4 3½" wagons @ 50.00
(Claremore, I.T.) P.
Foley-8 Springfield
wagons on hand).

Total sales \$908.00

⁹Homer McElhany's weekly sales report books, 1898, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

Thursday, May 19, 1898

Left Catoosa, I.T., by train
- 1:50 p.m.
Arrived in Sapulpa, I.T.
- 3:05 p.m.
Breakfast - Catoosa, I.T. - \$.25
Dinner - Catoosa, I.T. - .25
Supper - Sapulpa, I.T. - .50
Bed - Tulsa, I.T. - .40
Telegram - .40

Total day's expense \$1.80

Report for the day.

(Catoosa, I.T.) -
F. M. Reynolds & Co.
has on hand 2 Moline
wagons, will order
Springfield wagons in
30 days.
(Sapulpa, I.T.) -
manager of H. C. Hall
& Co. out of town.
(Red Ford, I.T.) -
manager of H. C. Hall
& Co. out of town
Total sales -0-

Friday, May 20, 1898

Left Sapulpa, I.T. by
train - 12:30 a.m.
Arrived in Vinita, I.T.
4:10 p.m.
Breakfast - Tulsa, I.T. - \$.35
Dinner - Tulsa, I.T. - .35
Supper - Vinita, I.T. - .50
Bed - Vinita, I.T. - .50

Total day's expense \$1.70

Report for the day.

(Tulsa, I.T.) -
J. M. Hall & Co. will
buy when H. C. Hall &
Co. of Sapulpa buy.
(Vinita, I.T.) - Sold
to Joseph Hunt
10 - 3" wagons @\$50.00
6 - 3½" wagons @50.00
2 - 2½" wagons @46.00
Total sales \$892.00

McElhany returned to Springfield on Sunday, May 22,
having spent \$13.75 while selling thirty nine wagons
for \$2,051.¹⁰ Extensive travel such as this, together
with good salaries, attracted ambitious young men to
become traveling agents for the Springfield Wagon
Company.

The Springfield firm enjoyed a good business
during 1899, and entered the twentieth century as one
of the four largest wagon manufacturers in the nation.
The other three members of this exclusive group were

¹⁰ Homer McElhany's weekly sales reports, book #7,
May 16-May 22, 1898, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

the Bain Wagon Company (Pekin, Illinois), the Schuttler Wagon Company (Chicago, Illinois), and Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company (South Bend, Indiana).

In 1901, Studebaker began phasing out production of horse-drawn vehicles and started concentrating upon automobiles.¹¹ After that date, Studebaker wagons gradually disappeared from the market, and the wagon trade came to be dominated by the three remaining large-scale manufacturers. The Springfield Wagon Company soon emerged as the most important of the three. By July, 1901, the company listed its subscribed, paid up capital stock at \$75,000, and the cash value of the firm's property and real estate exceeded \$175,000.¹²

During that year, a financier from Denver, Colorado, Peter McCourt, purchased the stock of Charles McCann.¹³ McCourt was a brother-in-law of Frank Fellows, having married the widow Emma (Fellows) Keet. The company was reorganized with Fellows as president and McCourt as vice-president and western sales manager. Curran remained secretary-treasurer.

¹¹For a complete discussion of Studebaker's transition from horse-drawn to motorized vehicles, see Longstreet, A Century on Wheels.

¹²Annual Report of Domestic Corporations, 1901, photostatic copy, Archives of the Missouri Department of State, Capitol building, Jefferson City, Missouri.

¹³"Fifty Years Ago Today," Springfield News & Leader, December 9, 1951, B-5.

As president, Frank Fellows proved to be as innovative as his father had been. Late in 1901, he began contracting to build circus and carnival wagons for traveling shows all over the country. These customers required many types of special vehicles such as heavy animal cages, band wagons, equipment wagons, and even offices on wheels. Of the nation's remaining wagon manufacturers, only the Springfield Wagon Company was equipped to build such heavy, large sized vehicles. The company soon obtained the business of most of the big carnivals and 75% of the traveling circuses. As an added service, the Springfield factory carried a full stock of replacement parts, ready for immediate shipment anywhere in the country.¹⁴ Some of the Springfield firm's permanent customers were Barnum & Bailey, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, Major Gordon W. Lillie, Miller Brothers 101 Ranch Show, and Ringling Brothers Circus.¹⁵ The new markets proved very lucrative and the company experienced its best year in operation to that time, building more than 6,000 wagons of various types.¹⁶

¹⁴F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company," p. 102.

¹⁵Ibid., See Springfield circus wagon photos in photo section.

¹⁶"Fifty Years Ago Today," Springfield Leader & Press, December 9, 1951.

Frank Fellows spent the next three years attending all the fairs, circuses, and carnivals he could. He became acquainted with many show people and farm implement dealers and learned first-hand exactly what types of wagons they required.¹⁷ This unorthodox study of transportation needs proved invaluable as the Springfield Wagon Company adapted to the new demands of the twentieth century.

In 1904, the company underwent another reorganization. It obtained a new corporate charter, to be in effect for fifty years. This new charter authorized capital stock of \$75,000 (750 shares at \$100 each). Fellows and Curran bought out McCourt and redistributed the stock, retaining 360 shares each. The remaining thirty shares were divided equally among factory superintendent L. J. Murphy, and directors A. T. Quisenberry, and William H. Horine.¹⁸ McCourt, who lived in Denver, retained the office of vice-president and western sales manager, but Fellows and Curran assumed control of the company.

The following year, the longstanding dispute between the Springfield Wagon Company and the National Wagon Manufacturers' Association came to an end. The

¹⁷F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company," p. 102.

¹⁸Springfield Wagon Company Corporate Charter, February 18, 1904, photostatic copy, Archives of Missouri Department of State, Capitol building, Jefferson City, Missouri.

trade group adopted the warranty of the Springfield company and the latter joined the Association. After that time, the Springfield Wagon Company exerted a great influence over the policies and actions of the National Wagon Manufacturers' Association.¹⁹ For the next seven years, the Springfield Wagon Company operated with very few problems and only minor changes in business procedure. During that time, the company consolidated its dominant position in the industry, as many former competitors ceased operations.

The next event of importance occurred in 1913. Frank Fellows, looking ahead to the time when trucks would replace wagons, began experimenting with semi-trailer designs. One of the first of these experiments involved a Springfield farm wagon with its front wheels hooked to the drive axle of an automobile. Carrying a 4,000 pound load, the wagon was pulled over unimproved country roads for testing and evaluation.²⁰ Although it was not streamlined, this first Springfield "trailer" created much comment and curiosity. Fellows and his workmen learned from the experiment and put their knowledge to good use in later years.

¹⁹Springfield Wagon Company 1908 Catalog, page 6, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

²⁰Seventieth Anniversary Catalog, 1941, photostatic copy, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

Between 1913 and 1915, the Springfield Wagon Company experienced a steady increase in demand for farm wagons, log wagons, and oil gears. Accordingly, the factory expanded in 1915.²¹ The company invested more than \$50,000 in new machinery including electric welding machines, electric drive motors on all machinery, and a 175 horsepower electric motor plant.²² The work force at the thirteen-acre factory was expanded to 150 men.²³ At that time, the Springfield Wagon Company had more employees with from ten to forty years of experience than any other wagon factory. This fact was proof of the dedication of Springfield's master wagon builders and of their satisfaction with their treatment by the company.²⁴ Water for the factory was furnished by a 1,250,000 gallon reservoir on the company's property and an automatic sprinkler system provided protection against fire. In addition, the company had over 600,000 board feet of hickory timbers and huge quantities of choice white oak lumber stored in its yards.²⁵ This was the largest hardwood supply in the wagon industry.²⁶

²¹Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, I, 677.

²²Stevens, Missouri the Center State, III, 322.

²³Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, I, 678.

²⁴Stevens, Missouri the Center State, III, 322.

²⁵Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, I, 678.

²⁶Stevens, Missouri the Center State, III, 322.

By the end of 1915, the factory had a productive capacity in excess of its annual output of 6,000 wagons.²⁷

For the next two years, the Springfield Wagon Company did an excellent business. When war came in 1917, the company joined the war effort, building thousands of escort wagons for the U. S. Army.²⁸ These wagons, which were slightly different from regular Springfield wagons, were built to government specifications and used by the army to haul ammunition and supplies and to transport soldiers behind the lines.²⁹

After the war, the Springfield Wagon Company resumed normal operations. Late in 1918, Frank Fellows hired a private secretary and bookkeeper; Christine Mason.³⁰ She soon became his "right hand" around the factory and, in later years, often managed the company for short periods while he was out of town.³¹ She reported that demand for Springfield wagons was strong after the war and that the company did a record business,

²⁷Fairbanks and Tuck, Past and Present, I, 678.

²⁸"Industry at Wagon Factory...", Springfield News & Leader, March 10, 1935, p. C-4.

²⁹See photo of U. S. Army escort wagon in photo section.

³⁰Christine Mason to Steve Stepp, ALS, November 30, 1971, Springfield Wagon Company Papers, author's correspondence.

³¹"Circus Folk Acclaim Fellows One of Them," Springfield News & Leader, April 4, 1940.

shipping carloads of wagons regularly into Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas.³² Although heavy production schedules kept the employees working at top speed, they were well paid and had good feelings toward the company. Above all, Frank Fellows' secretary remembered him as a kind man, considerate of all his employees.³³

The Springfield firm continued to enjoy increased sales and prosperity. In 1921, the company achieved the greatest sales year in its history; selling more than 7,200 wagons. Most of these were sold in its old trade areas, but, by that time, the firm also had several large dealers in New Mexico and Tennessee.³⁴

The following year, Frank Fellows and his partners decided to increase the capitalization of their wagon company. They did so by transferring \$525,000 from a surplus account into capital stock. This move raised the firm's capitalization from \$75,000 to \$600,000. They then declared a gigantic stock dividend and distributed it to the stockholders according to their holdings. After all of this financial maneuvering, the Springfield

³²Christine Mason to Steve Stepp, ALS, November 30, 1971. Springfield Wagon Company Papers, author's correspondence.

³³Ibid., January 10, 1972.

³⁴Bill Gott (Manager of Springfield Wagon Company Shipping Department, 1921-1952), Interview, October 28, 1971. On tape in Springfield Wagon Company Collection.

Wagon Company still had assets of \$702,317.71, with liabilities of only \$315.80. In addition, the balance in the company's surplus account remained in excess of \$102,000.³⁵

The firm steadily expanded its business during the next two years and, by 1925, virtually dominated the wagon industry. The Springfield Wagon Company had taken fifty-three years to achieve supremacy in the wagon trade and was on the verge of its greatest triumph.

³⁵Affidavit for Increase of Capital Stock of Springfield Wagon Company, December 22, 1922, photostatic copy, Archives of the Missouri Department of State, Capitol building, Jefferson City, Missouri.

CHAPTER VI

"The End of An Age"

The 1920's brought great changes in the wagon industry. Farm-to-market roads improved and, as the decade was relatively prosperous, trucks became practical as well as popular with farmers. After 1921, the demand for farm and road wagons steadily declined.¹ Many of the remaining eastern manufacturers faced shortages of materials and rising freight costs. These factors combined to force most of America's wagon factories out of business by 1925. Many of the surviving companies were in poor financial condition. This was the case with the Bain Wagon Company of Pekin, Illinois, and the Peter B. Schuttler Company of Chicago.²

The Springfield Wagon Company was, by comparison, still prosperous. This prosperity was due to several natural advantages. Among these were location near the last large wagon markets; the Midwest and Southwest, and proximity to vast hardwood supplies in southern

¹"The Springfields Keep Rolling Along," Esso Oilways, January, 1945, p. 3.

²"Industry at Wagon Factory...", Springfield News & Leader, March 10, 1935, p. C-4.

Missouri and northern Arkansas. The company created another competitive advantage by arranging for sales of its wagons through branches of the Oliver Chilled Plow Company in Kansas City, Oklahoma City, Dallas, and Denver.³ This gave the Springfield Wagon Company a much more sophisticated marketing system than other wagon manufacturers possessed.

Frank Fellows learned of the financial problems of his two outstanding competitors, and began negotiating with them. Late in 1925, the Springfield Wagon Company purchased the materials, equipment, and rights to the brand names of the Bain and Schuttler companies.⁴ This transaction left the Springfield company as the only large scale wagon builder in the nation and paved the way for the firm's final period of prosperity. After these purchases, approximately 10% of the company's business was done under the Bain and Schuttler brands.⁵ The factory built Springfield, Bain, and Schuttler wagons from the same Springfield patterns and out of identical materials, simply painting each brand in its traditional colors. The fact that this practice brought

³Newspaper clippings, Springfield History folder, information file, Southwest Missouri State College Library, Springfield, Missouri.

⁴"Industry at Wagon Factory..." Springfield News & Leader, March 10, 1935, p. C-4.

⁵F. F. Stice, interview, October 28, 1971.

no complaints from Bain and Schuttler customers was quite a tribute to the quality of Springfield wagons.⁶ In 1925 also, the Springfield Wagon Company introduced a new line of medium priced farm wagons; the Ozark brand. The Ozark, built from regular Springfield patterns, but using lower cost materials, met the demand for an inexpensive, heavily built farm wagon.⁷

After 1925, the company continued producing all four brands and gradually increased its already dominant share of the wagon market. Each brand was popular in a different geographic area; the Schuttler in the Deep South, the Springfield and Ozark in the midwestern states and Texas, and the Bain in the Rocky Mountain areas. In his later years, Frank Fellows often remarked that the Indians in Arizona, Oklahoma and New Mexico preferred Bain wagons. It was his belief that they saw some mystic symbol in the large and ornate BAIN lettered on the sides of those vehicles.⁸

As the demand for farm wagons dwindled during the late twenties, Frank Fellows again became interested in the trailer business. His experiments before World War I had convinced him that his factory could build high-quality trailers as easily as wagons, and he began

⁶F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company," p. 102.

⁷Springfield Wagon Company Catalog #46, (1925), Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

⁸F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company," p. 102.

to see trailer production as a growing business. He hoped to adapt to modern transportation needs by manufacturing trailers, and thus, to preserve the Springfield Wagon Company as a viable business after the day of horse-drawn vehicles ended.

In 1927,¹ Fellows bought out Frank Curran and his other partners and became sole owner of the company. He then proceeded to purchase the A.B.C. Trailer Company of Memphis, Tennessee, and moved it to his Springfield factory.⁹ Within a short time, the Springfield Wagon Company factory began turning out heavy-duty steel trailers as well as farm wagons. Springfield trailers were constructed of the newest and strongest types of steel available and carried from 1,000 to 1,500 pounds more weight than other brands of the same size.¹⁰ They were built with the same care and pride of workmanship as the famous Springfield wagons and soon became very popular with motor freight companies in the area. Some of the companies outfitted with Springfield trailers were:

Adams Union Truck Terminal
Campbell "66" Express
C. R. Groover Fruits &
Vegetables
East Texas Motor Freight
Frisco Transportation Co.

Jones Truck Lines
Producers Creamery Co.
Springfield Grocery Co.
Toombs-Fay & Co.
Tri-State Motor Transportation Co.¹¹

¹⁰F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company," p. 103.

¹¹Springfield Wagon Company Seventieth Anniversary Catalog, 1941, photocopy in Springfield Wagon Company Papers, (contains trailer photos).

Frank Campbell, president and founder of Campbell "66" Express, became acquainted with Fellows as a young man, often visiting "Uncle Frank" at the wagon factory office on Sunday mornings. The two developed a strong and lasting friendship, and when Campbell became interested in the freight transport business, Fellows aided him in setting up a corporation and built several trailers to help him get started. Although Campbell "66" Express grew into a huge inter-state trucking company, Campbell never forgot Frank Fellows' generous help, and used nothing but Springfield trailers as long as they were manufactured.¹² This short episode, recounted by Frank Campbell, illustrates in part, why "Uncle Frank" Fellows was able to preserve and expand his company long after other wagon factories ceased operating.

The Springfield Wagon Company produced a line of trailers as varied as its wagons. There were fruit, grain, cotton, and stock trailers, special lumber trailers, and rubber tired farm wagons. In addition, the company built a complete line of circus and carnival trailers for the big traveling shows. Within fourteen years, 90% of America's circuses and carnivals traveled in Springfield wagons and trailers.¹³

¹²Frank Campbell (President of Campbell "66" Express), Interview, August 14, 1971.

¹³Springfield Wagon Company Seventieth Anniversary Catalog, 1941, photocopy in Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

By 1928, the Springfield Wagon Company held virtual control of the wagon trade. Springfield wagons were so well-known and had so little competition that the company found advertising unnecessary. The factory kept busy filling orders for hundreds of large and small dealers across the nation.¹⁴ The dealer organization had gradually changed over the years and, by 1928, there were two distinct types of dealerships. One was the sales agency; usually a general store or hardware company where the Springfield Wagon Company stocked a small supply of wagons. Traveling representatives from the company checked these stocks and authorized payment of a 12½% commission to the agency for any sales.¹⁵

The other type of dealership was the wholesale dealer. These were usually large farm implement or heavy hardware companies with several branch sales offices. They purchased wagons by the carload (15 - 20 per car) and paid cash for them--usually about \$115 per wagon. They then retailed the wagons through farm implement agencies.¹⁶ The most popular wagon built by the company was the Springfield - 3" skein size. The

¹⁴C. E. McCubbin, (Salesman for Springfield Wagon Company, 1923-40), Interview, December 15, 1971.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

firm also sold large quantities of canary yellow one-horse wagons in Mexico.¹⁷

Having enjoyed another very successful year of business in 1928, Frank Fellows decided the time was right to up-date the company. He changed the corporation's name to the Springfield Wagon & Trailer Company¹⁸ and reduced the capital stock from \$600,000 to \$450,000.¹⁹ A. S. Gardner became secretary-treasurer and Peter McCourt remained vice-president and western sales manager.²⁰ With these changes, the Springfield Wagon & Trailer Company ended its fifty-sixth year of business and began 1929. It was about to face its greatest struggle for survival.

Before the Depression, the wagon industry had made a partial recovery from earlier setbacks, but with the "Great Crash", many of the remaining "old line" wagon companies failed.²¹ Most of these, such as

¹⁷C. E. McCubbin, (Salesman for Springfield Wagon Company, 1923-40), Interview, December 15, 1971.

¹⁸Affidavit of Change of Name (Springfield Wagon Company), November 17, 1928, photocopy, Archives of Missouri Department of State, Capitol building, Jefferson City, Missouri.

¹⁹Decrease of Capital Stock, (Springfield Wagon Company), December 31, 1928, photocopy, Archives of Missouri Department of State, Capitol building, Jefferson City, Missouri.

²⁰Affidavit of Change of Name (Springfield Wagon Company).

²¹"Industry at Wagon Factory...", Springfield News & Leader, March 10, 1935, p. C-4.

Emerson-Brandingham of Batavia, Illinois, were never to open again.²² The Springfield company was also hurt by the Depression. As money became scarce, sales of Springfield trailers slumped, and the company fell back upon wagon sales for survival. Frank Fellows had instituted cost-analysis procedures at the factory before the Depression to increase the economy and efficiency of its operation. This paid off during the lean years that followed and enabled the company to keep a force of sixty to seventy men working full time. As the Depression continued, farmers also attempted to cut costs and many bought wagons instead of trucks. This led to increased demand for wagons and provided enough business to keep the Springfield Wagon & Trailer Company operating.²³

By 1930, financial conditions improved for the company and it took special precautions to keep its skilled craftsmen satisfied. Although they were already well-paid in comparison with other factory employees in the city, "Uncle Frank" Fellows held a series of recognition banquets for his employees. One such banquet was held in 1930 in honor of workmen who had twenty-five years or more of service to the company.²⁴ Other

²²C. E. McCubbin, Interview, December 15, 1971.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Robert Greathouse (Springfield Wagon Company wagon box builder 1915-50), Interview, October 28, 1971.

occasions were celebrated in like manner to build and maintain good morale among the wagon builders and, once, Fellows even took all his employees to a circus.²⁵ However strange his methods may seem now, they accomplished their purpose, and Frank Fellows kept the loyalty and good will of his employees during the trying Depression years.

During the early 1930's, the Springfield Wagon and Trailer Company again improved its marketing system. This was done through the establishment of a large wholesale distribution center for the southeastern states; the Stratton-Warren Hardware Company of Memphis, Tennessee. Stratton-Warren warehoused a large stock of Schuttler wagons and wholesaled them to small sales agencies in that area.²⁶ In addition, Fellows made an agreement with the King Sales Company of Memphis to act as warehouse and sales agents for Springfield and Ozark wagons. A special sales organization, the Springfield-King Company, was created to market wagons to general merchandise and hardware stores in the Southeast.²⁷ These new outlets greatly increased sales and eased the effects of the Depression upon the Springfield Wagon & Trailer Company.

²⁵F. F. Stice, Interview, October 28, 1971.

²⁶Frank King, Jr. (Kings Sales Company) to Steve Stepp, ALS, January 15, 1972.

²⁷Ibid.

In March, 1935, a reporter for the Springfield News & Leader interviewed Frank Fellows to learn first-hand what impact the Depression had had upon the wagon industry. Fellows told him:

"The depression made it almost impossible for farmers to buy any kind of equipment. The low prices of cotton and farm goods kept the farmers broke.

But with the rise in cotton prices, the upturn started. The wagon business is now almost back to what we would call normal, and there is a possible chance for it to go on to the highest peak in history."²⁸

Following the interview, the reporter toured the factory. There, he saw eighty skilled craftsmen building Springfield wagons and trailers for shipment to dealers all over the nation and even to Chihuahua, Mexico. Fellows proudly announced that the company had received orders for 650 wagons the previous week and predicted a sales boom in the "cotton country".²⁹

For a short time, prosperity did return to the Springfield Wagon & Trailer Company. Thirty new farm wagons, worth \$120 each, and two \$1,200 trailers rolled out of the factory each day. The company's circus and carnival business also rebounded as the Ringling Brothers-Barnum & Bailey, Russell Brothers, and Seils-

²⁸"Industry at Wagon Factory..." Springfield News & Leader, March 10, 1935, p. C-4.

²⁹Ibid.

Sterling circuses all ordered new vehicles. The largest order of this type was thirty-two wagons for the Hennies Brothers Carnival. By that time, all Springfield circus and carnival wagons were rubber-tired to prevent pavement damage from the heavy vehicles and thus protect the traveling shows from lawsuits.³⁰

In addition to its output of commercial vehicles in 1935, the Springfield company designed and began building a new type of escort wagon for the U. S. Army. This new army wagon had a special towing tongue bracketed to one side, and a doubletree or "team hitch" fastened to the other. It could be converted in less than one minute to be drawn by either horses or a truck. The new model was smaller, lighter, stronger, and easier riding than the old escort wagons and was rubber-tired to permit towing at higher speeds.³¹

Government contracts for escort wagons, together with increasing trailer and farm wagon sales, created enough work for Fellows to keep his wagon builders busy during the last years of the Depression. In 1937, he increased their earnings somewhat by instituting a new plan for payment by piecework. Under this system, employees were guaranteed their regular daily wages and earned additional money any time their daily output

³⁰"Industry at Wagon Factory...", Springfield News & Leader, March 10, 1935, p. C-4.

³¹Ibid.

(figured on a flat rate per piece or job) exceeded their normal daily wages.³² Through incentives such as this, the Springfield Wagon & Trailer Company kept the good will of its workmen and insured their continuing interest in improving operations at the factory.

By 1938, the firm's gross sales returned to pre-Depression levels in excess of \$600,000 per year. Wagon production decreased during that year as farmers resumed their transition to trucks, but the Springfield company still led the industry; building more than 3,000 Springfield, Bain, Schuttler, and Ozark wagons. As the demand for wagons decreased, the market for trailers improved, hence, the company was able to increase its total sales dollar volume. During 1938, the Springfield Wagon & Trailer Company sold 500 semi-trailers, 1,000 small trailers, and 200 circus and carnival trailers.³³

The wagon business continued its downward trend through 1939, and Frank Fellows, seeing a declining market ahead, reduced the company's capitalization to \$300,000.³⁴ Several large firms such as Fruehauf had

³²Piece-Work Price Sheet, Springfield Wagon Company, August 12, 1937, photostatic copy, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

³³"Our Springfield," Springfield Leader & Press, September 11, 1938, p. E 8-9.

³⁴Certificate of Amendment to the Charter of the Springfield Wagon & Trailer Company, April 4, 1939, photostatic copy, Archives of Missouri Department of State, Capitol building, Jefferson City, Missouri.

begun manufacturing trailers by that time, and prospects for competition with their nationwide sales organizations did not look good to him. A few companies tried to persuade him to build automobiles in his factory, but the old "wagon man" was not interested.³⁵ By 1940, he had decided to sell his business and retire while he could still do so at a profit.

In 1941, Fellows began negotiations to sell his wagon company to the J. H. Phipps Lumber Company of Fayetteville, Arkansas, which had supplied hardwood wagon parts to the Springfield factory for many years. J. William Fulbright (now a U. S. Senator from Arkansas) was then president and part owner of Phipps Lumber. He had always been interested in the wagon business and was a close and trusted friend of Frank Fellows. Fulbright made several trips to Springfield to discuss the purchase and personally worked out the details with Fellows. On one such occasion, he and his accountant had just entered the factory grounds when they were startled by a loud and terrifying noise. Upon investigation, they discovered a huge elephant chained just outside the company's office. It seems that a circus had sent a trailer to the factory for repairs and that "Uncle Frank" Fellows, in an attempt to oblige his customer, had volunteered to keep the

³⁵Bill Gott, Interview, October 28, 1971.

elephant until the work on the trailer was finished. This experience, although disconcerting, did not deter Fulbright from his appointment, and an agreement was finally reached.³⁶

On October 24, 1941, Frank Fellows officially changed the name of his company back to the Springfield Wagon Company.³⁷ Soon after that, he sold the wagon division to Phipps Lumber and the trailer division and factory to the Fruehauf Trailer Company of Detroit, Michigan.³⁸ After sixty-nine years of manufacturing in Springfield, Missouri, the Springfield Wagon Company moved to Fayetteville, Arkansas.³⁹ There, deep in the hardwood country, it found a new home and operated for another ten years.

When Frank Fellows sold the Springfield Wagon Company in 1941, he did so with the knowledge that its tradition of excellence would be perpetuated

³⁶F. F. Stice, Interview, October 28, 1971.

³⁷Certificate of Amendment to the Charter of the Springfield Wagon & Trailer Company, October 21, 1941, photostatic copy, Archives of Missouri Department of State, Capitol building, Jefferson City, Missouri.

³⁸Christine Mason to Steve Stepp, ALS, November 30, 1971, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

³⁹On June 17, 1942, the officers of the Springfield Wagon Company of Springfield, Missouri met to dissolve the corporation. The company's books were closed with unencumbered assets in excess of \$324,000. Affidavit for Dissolution of Springfield Wagon Company, photostatic copy, Archives of Missouri Department of State, Capitol building, Jefferson City, Missouri.

under the new owners. In fact, he and J. William Fulbright had such high regard for each other that they drew up few formal papers to seal the transaction. Each man considered the other's word sufficient.⁴⁰

Fulbright paid Fellows approximately \$12,000 for the stock, equipment, and materials of the Springfield Wagon Company, and Fellows retained the accounts receivable, in excess of \$320,000. During the winter of 1941, the wagon materials and machinery were transported by rail to the yards of the J. H. Phipps Lumber Company in Fayetteville, Arkansas.⁴¹ In addition, the new owners persuaded several of the master craftsmen to move with the company. Most of these men had been departmental superintendents in the Springfield factory and were used to train and supervise other employees when the company resumed production in its new home.⁴² One of these experienced wagon builders was James Boles, a master wheelwright who had served in that capacity since 1904. He was reluctant to move when first offered the opportunity, but finally decided to go to Fayetteville

⁴⁰F. F. Stice, Interview, October 28, 1971.

⁴¹Senator J. William Fulbright to Steve Stepp, May 15, 1972.

⁴²F. F. Stice, Interview, October 28, 1971.

to make sure they did not put any "junk" materials in Springfield wagons.⁴³

In April, 1942, the company resumed production in its new Fayetteville factory with a work force of fifty-five men. J. W. Fulbright was elected to the United States congress that year, and left the company under the capable management of F. F. Stice, who had run the J. H. Phipps Lumber Company since 1938.⁴⁴ Stice, or "Fenner" as his men called him, was familiar with the wagon business, having manufactured hardwood parts on contract for the Springfield company for many years. He felt that it was unnecessary to improve the Springfield farm and road wagon, which was already leading the market in quality and sales, and he was determined to maintain that quality at all costs.⁴⁵

In a short time, the company was producing wagons at a rate exceeding 1940 levels.⁴⁶ Each man did his part from memory, and Springfield wagons were carefully built in the same way they had been for over seventy years. In addition, the firm continued manufacturing

⁴³Frank G. Lee (Production Manager and accountant, 1941-52), Interview, October 28, 1971.

⁴⁴F. F. Stice, Interview, October 28, 1971.

⁴⁵F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company," p. 97.

⁴⁶Frank G. Lee, Interview, October 28, 1971.

Bain, Ozark, and Schuttler wagons as sales steadily increased.⁴⁷

World War II was partially responsible for this upturn in the wagon business. During the war, tractors, gasoline, and rubber were rationed and farmers were encouraged to use horses and wagons to conserve metal and petroleum.⁴⁸ The result was a wagon boom. Although wagons also were rationed by counties and states, they were in great demand and the industry briefly revived.⁴⁹ In 1942 there were approximately forty wagon builders in the United States, of which Springfield and John Deere ranked first and second.⁵⁰ The Springfield company's gross sales averaged \$500,000 annually (2,500 wagons) during the war years, and F. F. Stice reported that they could have sold three times as many if metal parts and new wagons had not been rationed.⁵¹

Frank Fellows often visited the factory during the war and, on one occasion when steel was in short supply, made a trip with Stice to Terre Haute, Indiana, to persuade one of his old suppliers to sell steel to the Springfield Wagon Company. Such aid from Fellows,

⁴⁷Lincoln Boles (Wagon builder for Springfield Wagon Company, 1937-52), Interview, October 28, 1971.

⁴⁸F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company," p. 97.

⁴⁹F. F. Stice, Interview, October 28, 1971.

⁵⁰F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company," p. 97.

⁵¹F. F. Stice, Interview, October 28, 1971.

combined with his friendly advice given during frequent visits to the factory, helped the first years of operation in Fayetteville to go smoothly. In return, the company did special favors for him. One such favor involved shipping a Springfield wagon to a ranch in Colorado as a wedding present from Frank Fellows to his friend, Sally Rand, the famous fan dancer.⁵²

At the end of World War II, the Springfield Wagon Company was still the dominant manufacturer in the industry.⁵³ In fact, it supplied parts and wagon materials to the six wagon companies listed below:

A. M. Bernard Wagon Works	- New Iberia, Miss.
Consolidated Wagon & Machinery Co.	- Salt Lake City, Utah
Garland Wagon Co.	- New Orleans, La.
Huntington Wagon Works	- Huntington, Ind.
Jackson Manufacturing Co.	- Harrisburg, Pa.
Owensboro Wagon Co.	- Owensboro, Ky. ⁵⁴

In spite of its wartime recovery, the wagon industry suffered its final collapse when rationing ended.

Farmers and ranchers resumed their switch to trucks and tractors on a greater scale than ever before, and the demand for farm and road wagons fell to new lows. The Springfield Wagon Company experienced a drop in gross sales from \$500,000 in 1946 to about \$50,000 in 1947. Such catastrophic declines were character-

⁵²F. F. Stice, Interview, October 28, 1971.

⁵³"The Springfields Keep Rolling Along," Esso Oilways, January, 1945, p. 3.

⁵⁴Customer Card Files of the Springfield Wagon Company, 1942-1952, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

istic of the industry, and the situation was so grim that most of the other wagon manufacturers, including John Deere, got out of the business. This left the Springfield Wagon Company holding a virtual monopoly over wagon production and enabled the firm to make enough sales to keep operating for a while.⁵⁵

In 1948, the Springfield Wagon Company sold 935 wagons; most of which were shipped into the cotton fields of the South.⁵⁶ By 1949, however, most of the large cotton plantations switched to trucks and tractors and the wagon business dwindled even further.⁵⁷ That year, the company sold only 288 Springfield, Bain, Schuttler, and Ozark wagons.⁵⁸

Steadily decreasing demand convinced the owners of the Springfield Wagon Company that the wagon business was finally over. During 1950 and 1951, the factory finished up existing orders and stopped production.⁵⁹ Wagon sales totaled 148 in 1950 and only 75 in 1951.⁶⁰ Accordingly, in 1952, the management decided to close

⁵⁵F. F. Stice, Interview, October 28, 1971.

⁵⁶Shipping Orders of the Springfield Wagon Company, 1948, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

⁵⁷F. P. Rose, "Springfield Wagon Company," p. 97.

⁵⁸Shipping Orders of the Springfield Wagon Company, 1949, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

⁵⁹Frank G. Lee, Interview, October 28, 1971.

⁶⁰Shipping Orders of the Springfield Wagon Company, 1950-1951, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

out the wagon company. Most of the machinery which could not be adapted to other uses was sold for salvage,⁶¹ and the remaining wagons and parts were sold to anyone interested. When it was all over, the company's liquidation produced a small profit.⁶¹

In 1952, the Springfield Wagon Company ended eighty years of business and passed into history. Two years later Frank Fellows died. Today, all that remains to tell of the company's existence is the old wagon factory itself, several boxes of musty and brittle business records, and a few surviving Springfield wagons scattered across the Ozarks hills, the cotton fields of the South, and the windswept prairies of the Midwest.⁶² In Springfield, Missouri, and in Fayetteville, Arkansas, there are still some people who remember the company and a few who worked for it.

The significance of the Springfield Wagon Company, however, is greater than these few reminders might lead one to believe. The company was created to provide industry for Springfield, Missouri. Its success proved that manufacturing concerns could operate profitably there. In fact, the Springfield Wagon Company became the backbone of the city's industrial growth. It was

⁶¹Frank G. Lee, Interview, October 28, 1971.

⁶²The Springfield Wagon Company factory, built in Springfield in 1885, is still standing and is used as warehouse space by Harry Cooper Supply Company of Springfield, Missouri.

an example of the free enterprise system at its best; a company which began operations on a small scale and grew until it dominated its industry.

In addition to its own successes, the Springfield Wagon Company was important because it played a large part in the development of industry in the areas around it. Until the 1920's the Springfield Wagon Company was the largest manufacturing concern in southwest Missouri; as such, it provided an economic stimulus to the development of other industries, particularly those which supplied it. The firm purchased millions of board feet of lumber each year, thus providing a strong incentive to the establishment of area hardwood lumber companies, and its demands for iron parts and castings were partially met by local foundrys who profited by their proximity to the wagon factory.

The Springfield Wagon Company was also one of the area's largest employers, providing jobs for from one-hundred to two-hundred workmen from the Springfield area. Its payrolls and other business expenditures injected large sums of money into Springfield's economy on a regular basis.

For nearly a century, the Springfield Wagon Company contributed to the growth of the nation and to the economic expansion of the Ozarks region. Its history reflects both the commendable and the regrettable aspects of American business during those years, but above all

it is permeated with a sense of optimism and integrity. The company's success was based upon skilled management and a reputation for honesty and quality products. The men who built and ran the Springfield Wagon Company never allowed that reputation to be compromised for any reason.

This, then is the story of the Springfield Wagon Company; a pioneer industry upon whose wheels many Americans rode into the twentieth century.

APPENDIX A

EARLY SUPPLIERS OF THE SPRINGFIELD WAGON COMPANY

(Listed by categories and in alphabetical order)

Major suppliers listed in capitals.

INDUSTRIAL AND MISCELLANEOUS SUPPLIES

<u>Supplying Firm</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Began Supplying</u>
Anderson Road Cart Co.	Lansing, Mich.	1889
Arnold, John M.	Springfield, Mo.	1887
BARSTOW, CHARLES M. (jobber)	St. Louis, Mo.	1887
BERRY BROS. VARNISH MFG. CO.	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
Boston Blower Co.	Detroit, Mich.	1887
Bryan & Co., Coal	Memphis, Tenn.	1883
Buckeye Buggy Co.	Columbus, Ohio	1890
Bursdol Mfg. Co.	Indianapolis, Ind.	1886
CAMPBELL GLASS & PAINT CO.	Kansas City, Mo.	1893
Carpenter & Co., Tents & Covers	Chicago, Ill.	1887
Carter White Lead Co.	Omaha, Neb.	1893
Clark & Lyster Linseed Oil	Fredonia, Kan.	1893
COLLIER WHITE LEAD & OIL CO.	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
Connor Boiler & Pipe	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
Coverings		
Crystal Oil Co.	Cleveland, Ohio	1886
Curtis & Co., Mfg.	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Davis, Luthy & Co., Farm Mach.	Peoria, Ill.	1887
Defiance Machine Works	Defiance, Ohio	1882
Dodge Mfg. Co.	Mishawaka, Ind.	1886
Durkee Coal Co.	Weir City, Kan.	1889
Egan Co., Wood-working Mach.	Cincinnati, Ohio	1889
English, Morse & Co.	Kansas City, Mo.	1890
Fairbanks & Co., Scales	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
Falls City Varnish Co.	Louisville, Ky.	1886
FAY & CO., MACHINERY	Cincinnati, Ohio	1878
Fisher Machinery Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Forrest City Varnish Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
GAST & CO., PRINTING & LITHOGRAPHY	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Gies & Co., Lithographers	Buffalo, N. Y.	1882
Goodyear Rubber Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1887
Harrison Bros. & Co., White Lead	Philadelphia, Pa.	1883
HEATH & MILLIGAN PAINT MFG.CO.	Chicago, Ill.	1889
Heine Safety Boiler Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1889
HESSER & WICKHAM COAL & COKE	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Hill, Clark & Co., Machinery	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
Hoyt & Bro. Mfg. Co.	Aurora, Ill.	1886

INDUSTRIAL AND MISCELLANEOUS SUPPLIES (cont.)

<u>Supplying Firm</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Began Supplying</u>
Inland Printing Co.	Springfield, Mo.	1914
Johnson Machinery Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1893
Kansas City Advertising Co.	Kansas City, Mo.	1888
KANSAS & TEXAS COAL CO.	N. Springfield, Mo.	1886
Keith & Perry Coal Co.	Deepwater, Mo.	1887
Laidlaw & Clark Mfg. Co.	Cherokee, Kan.	1890
Leonard & Ellis Oils	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
Linley & Co., Machinists Supplies	St. Louis, Mo.	1887
Medart Patent Pulley Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1889
Metropolitan Rubber Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
Missouri Linseed Oil Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1889
Missouri Tent & Awning Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Morgan & Co., Coal Mines	Minden Mines, Mo.	1886
MORRISON TENTS & COVERS	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
MOUND CITY PAINT & COLOR CO.	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
National Lead Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1893
Nelson & Co., Paints & Varnishes	St. Louis, Mo.	1887
New American File Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
Noble, H. T.	Clinton, Mo.	1888
PLATT & THORNBURGH PAINT & GLASS CO.	St. Louis, Mo.	1884
Post & Hart Coal & Coke	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Ready Mixed Paints	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Remington Standard Type- writer Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1889
Ripley & Kimball	St. Louis, Mo.	1885
Rogers & Co., Grinding Mach.	Buffalo, N. Y.	1889
Rogers Coal Co.	N. Springfield, Mo.	1885
Royal Wood Preserver Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1903
Rumsey Mfg. Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1885
St. Albans Mfg. Co.	St. Albans, Vt.	1886
St. Louis Lead & Oil Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Sanders & Co., Wagon Covers	St. Louis, Mo.	1887
Schofield General Ad. Agents	New York, N. Y.	1882
Sechler Carriage & Cart Co.	Moline, Ill.	1889
Smith-Western Electrical Supply	Kansas City, Mo.	1889
Southwestern Railway Supply Depot	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
Speer, Jones & Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1889
Sprague Warden Electric Co.	Carthage, Mo.	1889
Springfield Car & Foundry Co.	Springfield, Mo.	1892
Stephens Printing Co.	Springfield, Mo.	1885
Sturtevant Co.	Chicago, Ill.	1893
Tiemann & Co., Paints	Chicago, Ill.	1885
Vacuum Oil Co.	Chicago, Ill.	1887
Ware Bros. Publishers	Philadelphia, Pa.	1903

INDUSTRIAL AND MISCELLANEOUS SUPPLIES (cont.)

<u>Supplying Firm</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Began Supplying</u>
Waters, Pierce Oil Co.	Springfield, Mo.	1889
Western Typewriter Exchange	St. Louis, Mo.	1888
WHITELAW BROS. PAINTS	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
Williams, White & Co.	Chicago, Ill.	1902
Young-Stone Printing Co.	Springfield, Mo.	1918

IRON AND STEEL WAGON PARTS AND MATERIALS

<u>Supplying Firm</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Began Supplying</u>
ALABAMA ROLLING MILL CO.	Birmingham, Ala.	1889
American Bolster Spring Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1889
American Screw Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
American Wire Nail Co.	Covington, Ky.	1886
Baker Chain & Wagon Iron Mfg. Co.	Beaver Falls, Pa.	1887
Ball, C. W.	Denton, Texas	1883
BECK & CORBITT IRON CO.	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Belleville Steel Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1893
Bessemer Rolling Mills	Bessemer, Ala.	1890
BIRMINGHAM ROLLING MILLS	Birmingham, Ala.	1887
BROWN & VAN ARSDALE MFG. CO.	Chicago, Ill.	1883
Cartwright Iron & Steel Co.	Steubenville, Ohio	1886
Cartwright, McCurdy & Co.	Chicago, Ill.	1882
Central Iron & Steel Supply Co.	Brazil, Ind.	1886
Chaplin Bolt & Nut Co.	Cleveland, Ohio	1883
CHICAGO SKEIN & AXLE CO.	Grand Crossing, Ill.	1887
Cleveland Axle Mfg. Co.	Cleveland, Ohio	1893
CLEVELAND HARDWARE CO.	Cleveland, Ohio	1882
CLEVELAND ROLLING MILL CO.	Cleveland, Ohio	1890
Coombs & Co., Iron Merchants	Ft. Wayne, Ind.	1886
Duggan-Parker Hardware Mfg. Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Emmick & Hatcher	Columbus, Ohio	1882
Ewald Iron Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
Ft. Scott Foundry & Machine Works	Ft. Scott, Kan.	1889
French Spring Co.	Pittsburgh, Pa.	1887
GIESLER & CO., BRAKE MFG. CO.	Muscantine, Iowa	1882
Hager & Sons Hinge Mfg. Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1890
Heimbucher, Jno., Iron Mfg. Rep.	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
HURLBUT WAGON BRAKE MFG. CO.	Racine, Wis.	1886
ILLINOIS IRON & BOLT CO.	Carpentersville, Ill.	1882
Julien House Hardwares	Dubuque, Iowa	1885
Kansas Rolling Mill Co.	Kansas City, Mo.	1882
Keefer Iron Co.	Kansas City, Mo.	1883
KELLY, MAUS & CO., HARDWARE	Chicago, Ill.	1888
Kimbark, Iron, Steel, & Nuts	Chicago, Ill.	1889
Kupferle Hardware Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1889
Laclede Roller Mills	Lebanon, Mo.	1887

IRON AND STEEL WAGON PARTS AND MATERIALS (cont.)

<u>Supplying Firm</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Began Supplying</u>
Lamson & Sessions Co.	Cleveland, Ohio	1888
Miller, Metcalf & Parkin Steel	Chicago, Ill.	1887
MISSISSIPPI IRON WORKS	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Missouri Malleable Iron Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
Moran Bolt & Nut Mfg. Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1889
National Tubular Axle Co.	Chicago, Ill.	1886
Neosho Foundry & Machine Works	Neosho, Mo.	1889
Nes Chain Co.	York, Pa.	1893
NIXDORFF-KREIN MFG. CO.	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
Ohio Clip Works	Westville, Ohio	1886
Oliver Bros. & Phillips Iron Co.	Pittsburgh, Pa.	1882
PADDOCK-HAWLEY IRON CO.	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Parkhurst & Wilkerson Iron	Chicago, Ill.	1882
Pittsburgh Hinge Co.	Beaver Falls, Pa.	1886
Pittsburgh Steel Skein Co.	Allegheny, Pa.	1889
Pittsburgh Tubular Steel Whiffletree Co.	Pittsburgh, Pa.	1888
Reeves Iron Co.	Canal Dover, Ohio	1889
Rogers & Baldwin Hardware Co.	Springfield, Mo.	1886
St. Louis Railway Supply Mfg.	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
SANDAGE STEEL SKEIN CO.	South Bend, Ind.	1890
Peter B. Schuttler Wagon Mfg.	Chicago, Ill.	1882
SHAPLEIGH & CANTWELL HARDWARE	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
Shirkle, Harrison & Howard Iron Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1889
Simmons Hardware Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1885
SLIGO IRON STORE CO.	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Springfield Foundry & Machine Co.	Springfield, Mo.	1884
Springfield Iron Co.	Springfield, Ill.	1882
Stephenson & Patterson Skein & Axle Works	Pittsburgh, Pa.	1887
Stewart & Bro., Machinists	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Stickney & Co., Varnishes	Boston, Mass.	1882
Studebaker Bros. Mfg. Co.	South Bend, Ind.	1889
Union Foundry & Machine Works	Mansfield, Ohio	1893
WATERMAN CAMPBELL IRON CO.	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Wells Rolling Mill	Chicago, Ill.	1886
Wisconsin Malleable Iron Co.	Milwaukee, Wis.	1893

LUMBER AND WOODEN WAGON PARTS

<u>Supplying Firm</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Began Supplying</u>
Adams, R. C.	Al-Lu-We, I. T.	1887
Alexander Hdwe. Co.	Corning, Ark.	1887
Ask, J. H.	Mankins, Ark.	1885
Austin & Brother Lumber	Bolivar, Mo.	1886

LUMBER AND WOODEN WAGON PARTS (cont.)

<u>Supplying Firm</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Began Supplying</u>
Bachman Lumber Co.	Indianapolis, Ind.	1886
Barham, J. T.	Polk, Mo.	1886
Berry, M. H.	Lone Tree, Mo.	1886
Blackman Lumber Co.	Toronto, Mo.	1885
BLACK ROCK LUMBER CO.	Black Rock, Ark.	1888
Black, W. C.	Butterfield, Mo.	1888
Blevins & Cravens Lumber	Dardanelle, Ark.	1890
Bloom & Co.	Walnut Ridge, Ark.	1889
Bollenbacher's Sons	Bloomington, Ind.	1886
Brown, C. N.	Talihana, I. T.	1888
Brown, James W.	Brentwood, Ark.	1889
Bruner & Co.	Wabash, Ind.	1886
Buffington Wheel Co.	Burlington, Iowa	1888
Burton, Frank	Portia, Ark.	1887
Bush, John	Vera Cruz, Mo.	1888
Byrd, George H.	Combs, Ark.	1888
Cedar County Lumber Co.	Stockton, Mo.	1888
Clapp, T. W.	Rogers, Ark.	1882
Clark & Wagoner Lumber Co.	Winona, Mo.	1890
Cole & Co., Hardware & Lumber	Jonesboro, Ark.	1886
CONE MFG. CO.	North Vernon, Ind.	1876
Cordz Yellow Pine Lumber	Birch Tree, Mo.	1887
Current River Lumber Co.	Monteer, Mo.	1890
Daggett & Briggs Lumber	Meredith, Ark.	1888
Davidson Mfg. Co.	Sullivan, Mo.	1893
DECKER LUMBER CO.	Portia, Ark.	1886
Drew, F.	Yocum, Ark.	1885
Druke Hardwood Lumber Co.	Ft. Smith, Ark.	1890
Eau Claire Lumber	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Edmonson Lumber Co.	Warsaw, Mo.	1886
Elem, R. P.	Afton, Ark.	1888
Emerson & Upland Lumber Co.	Rison, Ark.	1888
Emery, John M.	Polk Co., Mo.	1888
Estell, M.	Warsaw, Mo.	1888
Feldman, Jno.	Sedgwick, Ark.	1885
Fishbaugh Brothers	Tiffin, Ohio	1882
Flagg Lumber Mfg. Co.	Sherman, Ill.	1886
Fowler, B.	Palapinto, Mo.	1887
Fowler & Kniseby Hardwood Lumber	Warsaw, Mo.	1889
Fyffe, Will C.	Buckley, Mo.	1887
Ganahl Lumber Co.	St. Louis, Mo.	1886
Garrett Lumber Co.	Springfield, Mo.	1904
Garwitz & De Forrest Lumber	Houston, Mo.	1886
Gerber, A. F.	Willow Springs, Mo.	1889
Gibson & Co.	Concord, Ill.	1889
Glick & Hatcher Wagon Woodwork	Tiffin, Ohio	1889
Goulet & Cathroe	Black Rock, Ark.	1888
Greenwood Lumber Co.	Kansas City, Mo.	1893

LUMBER AND WOODEN WAGON PARTS (cont.)

<u>Supplying Firm</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Began Supplying</u>
Groom, Lem D.	Richland, Mo.	1886
Hall & Eddy, Lumber Mfg.	Louisville, Ky.	1883
Halliday & Lyles Lumber	Rudy, Ark.	1887
Hammett-Bailey Stave & Lumber Co.	Greenway, Ark.	1889
Harrison, W. R.	Richland, Mo.	1886
Hartley, Asa M.	Ava, Mo.	1888
Hasbrook & Son Mfg. Co.	Jonesboro, Ark.	1886
Hayne, Vaughn & Co.	Portia, Ark.	1885
Heckart Lumber Co.	West Plains, Mo.	1885
Hershey-Ewart Lumber Co.	Sargent, Mo.	1889
Higby Lumber Co.	Elkland, Mo.	1886
Hill & Co.	Lowles, Ark.	1882
Himmelburger & Co.	Buffington, Mo.	1888
Holt, Wm. J.	Harrison, Ark.	1886
Horn, D. L.	Warsaw, Mo.	1887
Hough, C. M.	Rogers, Ark.	1885
HOUGHTON HARDWOOD LUMBER	Black Rock, Ark.	1886
Howard Lumber Co.	Ripley, Tenn.	1886
Howell, White & Co.	Russellville, Ark.	1883
Humbolt Buggy & Wagon Co.	Humbolt, Tenn.	1886
Jenkins, T. J.	Eureka Springs, Ark.	1883
Johnson & Kennan Mdse.	Drakes Creek, Ark.	1888
Jones, Charles E.	Elkton, Mo.	1888
KANSAS CITY & SOUTHERN LUMBER	Sedgwick, Ark.	1893
KENDALL LUMBER CO.	Cabool, Mo.	1885
Knowles Lumber Co.	Houston, Mo.	1886
Lathrom, John	Mountain Grove, Mo.	1887
Lauler Hardwood Lumber	Black Rock, Ark.	1885
Leavitt Wheel Mfg. Co.	Vernon, Ind.	1878
London Bros. Sawmill	Alma, Ark.	1887
Lunsford & Hardesty	Rogers, Ark.	1882
McConnell Lumber Mfg.	Clarksville, Ark.	1887
McCracken Grain & Livestock	Sparta, Mo.	1886
McEvan, J. W.	Lamar, Mo.	1886
McMillan & Ebert Lumber	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Martin Mfg. Co.	Powhattan, Ark.	1886
Martin & Yost Lumber Co.	Arnica, Mo.	1887
Mavis, Robert	Deckard, Mo.	1889
Maxwell, J. M.	Orleans, Mo.	1885
Messick & Colt's Livery & Feed	Clinton, Mo.	1886
Michum, A.	Newport, Ark.	1889
Miller & Brown Lumber Co.	Mountain Grove, Mo.	1889
MISSOURI HUB FACTORY	Bem, Mo.	1885
Missouri Lumber & Mining Co.	Grandin, Mo.	1893
Mollner, R. H.	Delaney, Ark.	1887
Moore & Son, Lumber	Walnut Ridge, Ark.	1888
Morris, B. E.	Osceola, Mo.	1889
Morris, John A.	Rism, Ark.	1887

LUMBER AND WOODEN WAGON PARTS (cont.)

<u>Supplying Firm</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Began Supplying</u>
Morris Lumber Co.	Sterling, Mo.	1884
Morton, James M.	Deepwater, Mo.	1889
Mountain Grove Planing & Sawmill	Mountain Grove, Mo.	1887
Myers & Co., Lumber	St. Francis, Ark.	1888
Lee & Son Mfg.	Bradford, Ark.	1893
Newsom & Lincks	Brentwood, Ark.	1886
Newton Brothers Lumber Co.	Bolivar, Mo.	1886
North & Ewart Lumber Co.	Sargent, Mo.	1886
Olney Saw Mill	Black Rock, Ark.	1888
Osceola Cooperage Co.	Osceola, Mo.	1893
Owensboro Wheel Co.	Owensboro, Ky.	1893
Ozark Hardwood Co.	Osceola, Mo.	1893
OZARK LUMBER CO.	Winona, Mo.	1889
Patterson Lumber Co.	Watkins, Mo.	1886
Payne, Jesse R.	Polk, Mo.	1885
Peabody & Wills Lumber	Portia, Ark.	1887
PEARMAN LUMBER CO.	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Pendergraft, G. W.	Seligman, Mo.	1886
Pettingill-Love Lumber Co.	Warsaw, Mo.	1882
Phelps Ave. Wood Yard	Springfield, Mo.	1885
Phelps Lumber Co.	Phelps, Ark.	1889
PHIPPS LUMBER CO.	Fayetteville, Ark.	1898
Phipps Sawmill Co.	Stockton, Mo.	1886
Portia Lumber Co.	Portia, Ark.	1893
Pritchard Grain Co.	St. Paul, Ark.	1888
Rains, R. B.	Jonesboro, Ark.	1887
Ramsey Brothers	Springfield, Mo.	1889
Raynor, M. V.	St. Paul, Minn.	1888
Reed & Ferguson	Fayetteville, Ark.	1890
Rogers, W. C.	Talihana, I. T.	1889
Rountree, T. J.	Reyno, Ark.	1890
Routh & Sons	Stockton, Mo.	1886
Sherwood & Royall	Glen Hazel, Pa.	1893
SHOFFNER LUMBER CO.	Union City, Tenn.	1874
Sims & Brother	Imboden, Ark.	1888
Smith, George W.	Paola, Kan.	1882
Smith Mfg. Co.	Tiffin, Ohio	1887
Sorrels, E. T.	Leffore, I. T.	1888
Southwestern Lumber & Timber Ass'n.	St. Francis, Ark.	1889
Springfield Lumber & Cooperage Co.	Springfield, Mo.	1886
Stanton, S.	Jonesboro, Ark.	1886
Stevens Dyersburg Mills	Dyersburg, Tenn.	1883
Stobie & Co., Hard Lumber	Black Rock, Ark.	1887
Stothard, C.	Sumner, Mo.	1889
Tatum, H. A.	Pearl, Mo.	1888
Taylor Hardwoods	Piedmont, Mo.	1889

LUMBER AND WOODEN WAGON PARTS (cont.)

<u>Supplying Firm</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Began Supplying</u>
Townley Bros. Lumber	Fisher, Ark.	1888
Union Turning Works	Brinkley, Ark.	1887
Von Behren & Co., Woodworks	Evanston, Ind.	1885
Waldron, Hill & Co.	Bloomington, Ind.	1890
Walker, Hermie	Lowry City, Mo.	1887
Wall, George	Golden, Mo.	1889
Ward, T.	Winslow, Ark.	1882
WARNER LUMBER CO.	St. Louis, Mo.	1882
Weir & Mathews	Black Rock, Ark.	1889
Weis & Son	Fulton, Ky.	1893
White River Lumber Mfg. Co.	Newport, Ark.	1889
Wickes Bros. Sawmill	Saginaw, Mich.	1905
Wilkes & Chandler Lumber Co.	Portia, Ark.	1888
WILLIAMS AGRICULTURAL LUMBER	Moark, Ark.	1885
Williams & Co., Lumber	Memphis, Tenn.	1893
Wilson, J. C.	Crosses, Ark.	1890
WOODY, HOLMES & CO., HUBS & SPOKES	Minturn, Ark.	1882
Wright, J. W.	Dump, Ark.	1889

The information listed in Appendix A was drawn from the correspondence between the Springfield Wagon Company and its suppliers contained in the Springfield Wagon Company Papers. Many of the same companies were still regular suppliers in 1952 when the Springfield Wagon Company ceased operations.

APPENDIX B

Early Springfield Wagon Dealers

(Listed by state, city, and in chronological order)

ARKANSAS

<u>Location</u>	<u>Dealer</u>	<u>Dealership Began</u>
Avoca	A Peel Gen. Mdse.	1885
Batesville	Maxfield & Bro., Merchants	1890
Bellefont	Maggard, Walters & Son	1885
Bentonville	N. S. Henry Hdwe. & Impl.	1883
Bentonville	Magruder & McAdams	1885
Bentonville	Burkette-Hickman Hdwe.	1893
Bruno	F. G. Huddleston, Gen. Mdse.	1888
Bruno	Cantrell & Angel Gen. Mdse.	1889
Calf Creek	Hodges & Taylor	1886
Carrolton	Len Nunnally Gen. Mdse.	1882
Cave Creek	Dickey & Powers Gen. Mdse.	1885
Coal Hill	T. R. Brown Gen. Mdse.	1886
Combs	Jones & Thompson	1888
Dardanelle	Hawkins Gen. Mdse.	1889
Drake Creek	Johnson & Kennan Dry Goods	1882
Eureka Springs	J. W. Cary	1882
Eureka Springs	H. I. Seidel & Co.	1886
Fayetteville	Harrison, Botefuhr & Co.	1882
Fayetteville	Albright Hdwe. & Impl.	1883
Fayetteville	Reed & Ferguson Gen. Mdse.	1887
Fort Smith	Sengel & Schulte (wholesaler)	1882
Fort Smith	Stone & Co., Gen. Mdse.	1885
Gassville	Cox & Denton Gen. Mdse.	1882
Hardy	Clayton & Cope Gen. Mdse.	1885
Hardy	Wilson & Co., Gen. Mdse.	1885
Harrison	Phillips & Baker Hdwe.	1884
Harrison	G. C. Rhodes	1887
Harrison	Tyson & Lopp (wholesaler)	1889
Harrison	R. F. King & Co.	1893
Hica	Sam Box, Wagons, Hacks & Buggies	1888
Imboden	Dodson & Chesser Gen. Mdse.	1885
Imboden	Sloan & Co., Gen. Mdse.	1887
Jonesboro	W. D. Altman & Co.	1882
Jonesboro	A. M. Davis	1885
Lead Hill	Pumphrey & Cantrell	1883
McBee's Landing	W. C. McBee	1886
McCrory	Watson, Wilder & Co.	1888
Mammoth Springs	J. M. Archer & Daniel & Co.	1886
Marshall Prairie	Mallard & Patton	1885
Maysville	N. S. Jackson	1888
Melbourne	Hickle Bros. Gen. Mdse.	1885
Mississippi Bend	Nelson & Schoyesin	1882

ARKANSAS (cont.)

<u>Location</u>	<u>Dealer</u>	<u>Dealership</u> <u>Began</u>
Mountain Home	J. M. Casey	1882
Mountain Home	Truman & Leonard	1885
Mountain Home	Bodenhammer & Littlefield	1887
Oakland	A. S. Layton & Co.	1887
Ozark	M. B. Connaster Gen. Mdse.	1887
Ozark	Jennings & Co., Gen. Mdse.	1889
Ravendon	Sam H. Ball	1885
Reyno	Miller & Co., Plantation Supplies	1888
Rogers	Dyer Bros. Hdwe. & Impl.	1886
Rogers	Bryant Hdwe. & Machinery	1888
Salem	F. M. Daniel Gen. Mdse.	1885
Salem	Castleberry & Co., Gen. Mdse.	1887
Shady Green	Hensley & Bros.	1883
Siloam Springs	Robert E. Henry	1886
Springdale	J. Holcomb	1882
Springdale	Farrar & McGannon Impl.	1887
Valley Springs	Fulbright & Morrison Dry Goods	1882
Van Buren	Myer, Hodges & Co.	1883
Webb City	Parkes & Co., Gen. Mdse.	1886
Western Grove	Allen & Stephens	1887
Yellville	H. T. Jones Gen. Mdse.	1882
Yellville	Layton & Cowdrey	1885

INDIAN TERRITORY

<u>Location</u>	<u>Dealer</u>	<u>Dealership</u> <u>Began</u>
Alderson Station	Grady Trading Co.	1890
Al-Lu-We	J. E. Campbell, Gen. Mdse.	1887
Ardmore	J. B. Spraggins & Co.	1893
Atoka	A. B. Cass Gen. Mdse.	1882
Atoka	J. J. Phillips	1888
Atoka	G. A. Cobb	1898
Baker	Carver & Price	1898
Broken Arrow	Ruth & Paschal Impl.	1904
Caddo	W. H. Ainsworth Gen. Mdse.	1883
Caddo	W. N. Jones Gen. Mdse.	1883
Catoosa	F. M. Reynolds	1898
Chelsea	C. W. Poole Gen. Mdse.	1887
Chelsea	Milan & McIntosh	1898
Chouteau	J. F. Warren	1882
Chouteau	G. H. Lewis Gen. Mdse.	1883
Cushing	J. B. Charles	1898
Eufaula	Grayson Bros. Gen. Mdse.	1882
Eufaula	Patterson & Foley Gen. Mdse.	1882
Eufaula	Burdette Hdwe. Co.	1893
Fairland	F. M. Connor	1898
Fort Gibson	J. S. Scott Gen. Mdse.	1882

INDIAN TERRITORY (cont.)

<u>Location</u>	<u>Dealer</u>	<u>Dealership</u> <u>Began</u>
Foyil	A. Foyil	1898
Hartshorn	Chastain, Phillips & Co.	1890
Krebs	T. J. Phillips Gen. Mdse.	1883
McAlester	C. C. Rooks & Co.	1888
McAlester	Osage Trading Co.	1889
McAlester	McAlester Trading Co.	1898
Muskogee	H. O. Dow & Co., Farm Mach.	1882
Muskogee	Turner & Byrne Hdwe. Co.	1882
Muskogee	Manden Hdwe. Co.	1898
Muskogee	Huber Hdwe. Co.	1902
Okmulgee	F. B. Severs Gen. Mdse.	1882
Red Fork	James Parkinson Gen. Mdse.	1886
Red Fork	H. C. Hall & Co.	1893
Sapulpa	J. C. Wallace Gen. Mdse.	1889
Sapulpa	H. C. Hall & Co.	1898
Sennett	L. C. Sennett & Co.	1898
South Canadian	Pettit Gen. Store	1883
Strington	W. F. Haynes Gen. Mdse.	1886
Standley	Short & Pickering	1893
Tahlequa	Thompson Gen. Mdse.	1887
Tulsa	J. M. Hall & Co.	1893
Tushkahoma	Jackson Gen. Mdse.	1890
Utica	Blossum Gen. Mdse.	1886
Vian	R. C. Adams & Bro., Gen. Mdse.	1888
Vinita	Patton & Co., Gen. Mdse.	1883
Vinita	Joseph Hunt	1893
Wagoner	Miller & Co., Gen. Mdse.	1889
Wagoner	Parkinson Merchantile Co.	1893
Wagoner	Wagoner Hdwe. Co.	1898
Webbers Falls	R. E. Blackstone Gen. Mdse.	1886
Webbers Falls	Harles Gen. Mdse.	1888
Wilberton	Osage Trading Co.	1893
Wyandotte	Darrough & Co.	1898

KANSAS

<u>Location</u>	<u>Dealer</u>	<u>Dealership</u> <u>Began</u>
Anthony	Marsh Vehicle Co.	1893
Arcadia	Henry Conklin	1889
Arkansas City	Oklahoma Impl. Co.	1889
Arkansas City	White-Hill & Co.	1893
Augusta	W. S. Earle Hdwe.	1886
Baltimore	Gilliard Gen. Mdse.	1882
Bronson	Orreall & Flake	1886
Burlington	H. E. Watkins	1889
Cherokee	Chadsey Mdse. & Grain	1883
Cherokee	Laidlow Ag. Equipment	1886

KANSAS (cont.)

<u>Location</u>	<u>Dealer</u>	<u>Dealership Began</u>
Cherokee	Wiles Hdwe. Co.	1889
Coffeyville	Boswell & Co., Hdwe.	1887
Columbus	A. Hood & Co.	1893
Fort Scott	Fort Scott Grain & Impl. Co.	1882
Fort Scott	Henry L. Page, Carriages & Wagons	1886
Fredonia	J. W. Paulen Hdwe.	1886
Girard	Barker Hdwe. Co.	1893
Glendale	Bourbon County Impl. Co.	1889
Greeley	Truefit Bros.	1883
Kiowa	Harold & Metz	1893
Leon	W. C. Butts	1887
Mapleton	Samuel Hdwe. & Impl.	1890
Mulberry	Austin Ag. Impl.	1889
Mulvane	Badger Hdwe. & Impl.	1886
Neodosha	Cross Hdwe. & Impl.	1886
Paola	West & Bigelow	1887
Parsons	I. H. McCurry	1887
Pittsburg	Pittsburg Hdwe. Co.	1888
Pittsburg	Marsteller & Staley	1893
Sedgwick	Congdon Bros. & Johnson Hdwe.	1886
Severy	Carey & Flemmons Hdwe. & Impl.	1889
Weir City	Robinson Wagons & Impl.	1888
Wellington	Larned & Co., Hdwe. & Impl.	1883
Winfield	W. A. Lee Ag. Impl.	1886
Wichita	C. F. Derby & Co.	1883
Wichita	M. & W. S. Baker	1893
Yates Center	Boner & Wilson	1886

MISSOURI

<u>Location</u>	<u>Dealer</u>	<u>Dealership Began</u>
Arcola	Small, Bales & Co.	1886
Arcola	Stewart, Hawkins & Co.	1887
Arcola	Porter & Huber Hdwe.	1889
Arcola	Sloan & Sons	1890
Arlington	L. F. Putman	1898
Arno	Sam Turner Gen. Mdse.	1882
Ash Grove	W. T. Chandler Gen. Mdse.	1882
Ash Grove	W. C. Crain (& Hawks)	1883
Ash Grove	Murphy & Livingston Grocery	1885
Ash Grove	Huff & Turk	1893
Aurora	Davis & Miller Gen. Mdse.	1882
Aurora	Aurora Merchantile & Inv. Co.	1888
Ava	J. A. G. Reynolds & Son, Gen. Mdse.	1887
Billings	Sanders, Russell & Co., Gen. Mdse.	1882
Birch Tree	Green & Ward Gen. Mdse.	1889
Bois D'Arc	Prophet, Jay & Co.	1885

MISSOURI (cont.)

<u>Location</u>	<u>Dealer</u>	<u>Dealership</u> <u>Began</u>
Bois D'Arc	J. W. Frame & Co.	1893
Bolivar	Wm. Gary & Son	1882
Bolivar	J. D. Raney & Co., Impl.	1885
Bolivar	Bolivar Hdwe. Co.	1886
Bolivar	T. B. Evans & Co.	1893
Brighton	McGuire & Co., Gen. Mdse.	1887
Berckley	J. M. Butcher	1889
Buffalo	Randles, Wollard & Co.	1882
Buffalo	Buffalo Hdwe. Co.	1885
Buffalo	C. H. Behrens & Bro., Gen. Mdse.	1888
Cabool	Farris & Co.	1883
Cabool	L. A. Cochrane	1885
Cabool	John Banch	1888
Cane Hill	W. A. Dale	1885
Carl Junction	McFerran & Smith Farm Mach.	1887
Carthage	Brownsill Carriages & Wagons	1886
Carthage	Cornell & Linn Farm Mach.	1886
Cassville	Talbert & Co.	1882
Cassville	Hudson & Hesse	1887
Chadwick	J. L. Lee & Co., Gen. Mdse.	1887
Clinton	Allison & Snelling	1885
Clinton	C. L. Orth & Co., Ag. Impl.	1888
Conway	Conway Hdwe. & Lumber Co.	1893
Dadeville	John N. Landers Gen. Mdse.	1889
Dadeville	J. W. Toliver Gen. Mdse.	1889
Deepwater	White & Co., Furniture & Hdwe.	1885
Dixon	J. Isaacs Gen. Mdse.	1882
Dixon	John S. Rhea & Co.	1885
Dixon	W. J. Gremeczyski	1887
Dixon	Imboden & Spalding Dry Goods	1888
Dixon	Dixon Hdwe. Co.	1898
Everton	Hughes & Clark	1882
Everton	Wilson Bros. Dry Goods	1885
Everton	McLemore Bros.	1887
Exeter	Kersey & Co., Wagons & Impl.	1887
Fair Grove	Wamack & Hartley	1893
Fordland	H. Rabenau	1886
Forsyth	R. W. Cline (traveling agent)	1886
Forsyth	Baldwin & Burdette	1887
Gainsville	Wood & Reed	1893
Golden City	Cornell Bros.	1887
Greenfield	R. S. Jacobs & Co., Gen. Mdse.	1882
Greenfield	Howard Bros. Livery	1885
Greenfield	J. H. Kimber & Son	1885
Greenfield	Grether Ag. Impl.	1885
Hartville	Carter, Montgomery & Co.	1893
Hermitage	Wm. Howard Gen. Mdse.	1887
Houston	Leavitt & Son Gen. Mdse.	1888
Humansville	Keirse & Rains	1887

MISSOURI (cont.)

<u>Location</u>	<u>Dealer</u>	<u>Dealership Began</u>
Independence	Russell Hdwe. Co.	1890
Jerico	Peer & Brown Hdwe. & Impl.	1888
Joplin	Webster Trading Co.	1887
Kirbyville	John Kintrea Gen. Mdse.	1888
Lamar	Barton Co. Wagon & Carriage Works	1886
Lamar	G. A. Seyffert	1887
Lawrenceburg	Wilkerson & McCray	1882
Lebanon	D. W. Faulkner	1873
Lebanon	Wallace Bros.	1885
Lebanon	W. H. Owen & Co.	1887
Lockwood	L. T. Farris	1882
Lockwood	Lawson & Ryan	1887
Lockwood	Koehler Hdwe., Impl., & Wagons	1888
Mansfield	J. C. Spence & Co.	1883
Marionville	Jarrett & Bradford	1883
Marionville	Jones, Gillette & Co.	1885
Marionville	J. W. Gilley	1887
Marionville	Coleman Bros. Hdwe. & Impl.	1888
Marshfield	Jameson & Jennings	1873
Marshfield	Barnes, Evans & Co.	1882
Marshfield	Aldridge & Florence	1887
Marshfield	C. W. Brooks	1898
Miller	Friar & Stockton	1893
Mountain Grove	Douglass & Hughes	1882
Mountain Grove	H. C. Miller	1886
Mountain Grove	Penninger & Sackville	1887
Mountain Grove	Green & Hughes	1889
Mountain View	Ed. J. Ruscha	1888
Mount Vernon	Wright & Co., Gen. Mdse.	1882
Nevada	Johannes & Sons Impl.	1889
Newburg	J. W. Scanlon	1898
Niangua	D. H. Mitchell & Co.	1898
Norwood	C. Lehman & Co.	1883
Norwood	J. H. Robinett & Co.	1890
Osceola	Woodall & Gordon Hdwe.	1885
Ozark	J. W. Robertson & Sons	1887
Ozark	Duncan & Jones	1893
Pierce City	I. P. Linzie	1882
Pierce City	Lehnhard Ag. Impl.	1889
Pleasant Hope	J. C. F. Frilliston & Co.	1885
Pleasant Hope	Rymer & Burnes	1893
Protem	J. R. Pumphrey	1882
Protem	Moore Dry Goods & Hdwe.	1888
Reeds	A. A. Young (Farmers Alliance Rep.)	1888
Republic	A. S. Grove & Co., Hdwe. & Impl.	1888
Richland	G. W. Morgan & Co.	1883
Richland	Lem D. Groom Hdwe. & Wagons	1887
Richland	Evington & Co., Hdwe. & Impl.	1890
Rockbridge	B. V. Morris Dry Goods	1891

MISSOURI (cont.)

<u>Location</u>	<u>Dealer</u>	<u>Dealership</u> <u>Began</u>
Rolla	L. H. Thompson	1898
Sarcoxis	Sarcoxis Hdwe. Co.	1888
Sarcoxis	John Paxton Impl.	1889
Seligman	Woodbridge Anable Dry Goods	1887
Seneca	McGannon & Bro. Hdwe.	1886
Seymour	Robertson & Trimble	1884
Sparta	S. G. McCracken	1885
Sparta	D. W. Bird & Co.	1887
Sparta	Fulbright & Co., Hdwe.	1888
Sparta	H. J. Hinckle & Co.	1893
Springfield	McGregor-Noe Hdwe. Co.	1873
Sterling	John Morris	1885
Stockton	Frank H. Smith	1885
Stockton	Hayden & Webb	1887
Swan	J. D. Dykes & Son	1887
Thayer	J. S. Risher, Gen. Mdse.	1887
Thayer	H. J. F. Davis	1893
Thornfield	G. W. Percy & Co., Gen. Mdse.	1882
Vienna	R. L. Schenker, Gen. Mdse.	1889
Verona	Allen Miller & Son	1882
Verona	August Smith Gen. Mdse.	1887
Walnut	Moses Baum	1883
Walnut Grove	Kerr Hdwe. & Impl.	1887
Walnut Grove	J. A. Brim Hdwe.	1890
Washburn	R. F. Winder	1883
Webb City	Webb City Trading Co.	1888
West Plains	S. J. Langston & Bro.	1882
West Plains	Carter & Alsup	1883

TEXAS

<u>Location</u>	<u>Dealer</u>	<u>Dealership</u> <u>Began</u>
Abbott	J. H. Price & Co.	1893
Austin	John Hildebrand	1893
Belton	Wilson & Austin	1893
Bonham	W. W. Hobbs	1893
Brownwood	Moss & Savage	1893
Denton	R. L. Wilson	1887
Dublin	F. M. Bratton	1893
Dundee	Alex Albright	1893
Ennis	A. J. Soape	1893
Fort Smith	Musick & Hall	1893
Gainsville	Stevens, Kennerle & Spragins	1893
Georgetown	O. L. Spencer	1893
Greenville	J. L. Beall	1893
Grossbeck	F. C. Oliver & Son	1893
Henrietta	P. F. Williams & Co.	1893

TEXAS (cont.)

<u>Location</u>	<u>Dealer</u>	<u>Dealership</u> <u>Began</u>
Honey Grove	Hockaday, Gray & Co.	1893
Kerrville	Charles Schreiner	1893
Lott	Threadgill & Barnett	1893
Mexia	Groover, David & Freeman	1893
Paris	H. S. Bettis Hardware Co.	1893
Sherman	Byers Brothers Buggies & Wagons	1883
Sherman	J. R. Cole	1893
Staska	R. B. Brown	1893
Stephensville	Crouse & Leonard	1893
Vernon	Merchison & Low	1893
Waco	J. E. Hutto	1893
Whitesboro	Marshall & Co.	1893
Wichita Falls	M. L. Vickers	1893
Wolf City	W. D. Harrison	1893

APPENDIX C

Springfield Manufacturing Company

Financial Statement

Assets and Liabilities¹

December 3, 1874

ASSETS

unmanufactured material	\$ 1,515.00
real estate and buildings ²	4,000.00
machinery	6,000.00
99 wagons at \$75.00 each	7,425.00
5 wagons at \$60.00 each	300.00
bills received and accounts on books	<u>11,152.21</u>
	\$30,152.21

LIABILITIES

due on notes and bills payable	\$25,545.28
TOTAL ASSETS OVER LIABILITIES	\$ 4,906.09

¹"The Wagon Works," Springfield Daily Herald,
February 10, 1884, p. 2.

²Buildings listed were: (1) two story 30'x80'
main shop, (2) old blacksmith shop, (3) office.

APPENDIX D

Report on Springfield Wagon Company Fire

October 28, 1883¹

Fire began at 3 a.m. in a defective drying kiln and spread through the factory. Most of the factory buildings and machinery as well as the Pacific House (hotel) and the old brewery building owned by the wagon company were destroyed. Large amounts of materials and wagons were saved.

Total loss	\$45,000.00
Insurance	19,250.00
Net Loss	<u>\$25,750.00</u>

INSURING COMPANIES

American of Newark (New Jersey)	\$1,000
Boyiston Mutual (Boston)	1,250
Buffalo German (Buffalo, N. Y.)	1,000
City of London	1,000
Continental	1,500
Fireman's (Dayton, Ohio)	1,000
German American of New York	1,000
German American of Peoria (Illinois)	1,000
Lancashire	1,500
London Assurance	1,000
Mfg. Fire & Marine of Boston	1,000
New York Alliance	1,000
Niagara	1,000
Orient (Hartford)	1,000
Phoenix (London)	1,000
Queen (Liverpool)	750
St. Paul Fire & Marine of Boston	1,000
Springfield Fire & Marine of Mass.	1,250

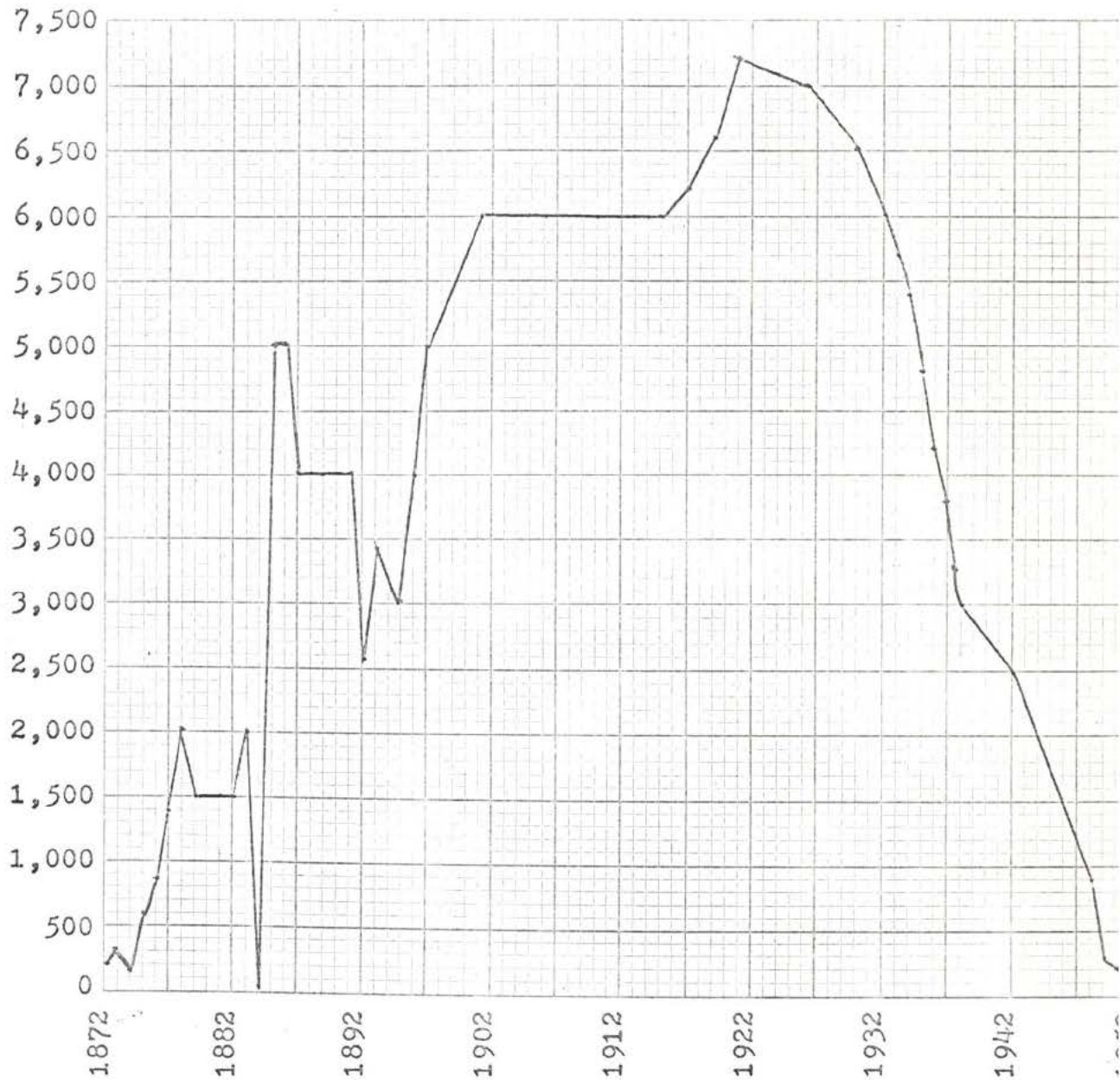
¹"Gone Up In Smoke: Destruction of the Springfield Wagon Factory," Springfield Express, November 2, 1883, p. 3.

APPENDIX E

SELECTED STATISTICAL INFORMATION

WAGON SALES, 1872-1952

Wagons
8,000



The above statistics are drawn from the Springfield Wagon Company Papers and from other sources listed in the bibliography of this paper.

GROSS SALES DURING GROWTH PERIOD, 1885-1889

(Showing monthly fluctuations)¹

Month	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889
Jan.	\$ 1,290	\$ 801	\$ 5,522	\$ 2,929	\$ 3,448
Feb.	1,334	2,070	3,897	3,931	3,011
March	1,291	3,753	6,607	5,221	4,410
April	1,324	2,882	5,924	4,278	3,768
May	1,211	5,543	3,300	9,317	7,129
June	1,514	4,504	6,875	5,979	5,653
July	3,678	9,245	13,077	7,008	10,435
Aug.	7,216	12,575	12,241	12,059	16,170
Sept.	5,503	11,552	10,232	15,232	14,885
Oct.	7,334	15,087	13,732	17,327	15,528
Nov.	10,301	11,702	12,719	9,330	13,886
Dec.	4,987	7,476	5,101	5,189	9,659
	\$46,983	\$87,190	\$99,227	\$97,800	\$107,982

SELECTED STATISTICS; PERIOD OF FINAL DECLINE, 1944-49²

	1944	1945	1946
Net Sales	\$179,108	\$274,218	\$381,433
Inventory	74,553	103,483	189,964
Gross Profit	27,380	49,788	70,009
Net Profit	16,884	32,883	27,042
Total Assets	119,623	139,382	187,160

	1947	1948	1949
Net Sales	\$379,818	\$361,320	\$130,629
Inventory	193,763	110,064	130,101
Gross Profit	47,681	45,988	23,356
Net Profit	9,052	5,888	(939)
Total Assets	233,005	179,518	160,595

¹Monthly and annual sales figures (1884-89) compiled by Secretary Fred A. Wishart, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

²J. L. Swofford & Company, Yearly Audits of the Springfield Wagon Company, 1944-50, Springfield Wagon Company Papers.

APPENDIX F

PHOTO SECTION



Always Use
The Old Reliable
SPRINGFIELD
Wagon
The Only Wagon with
Second Growth Spokes^{plus} Steel Tire



COLONEL HOMER FRANKLIN FELLOWS—1880



FRANK FELLOWS—1940

The Springfields keep rolling along!

Springfield is a name that has been associated with circus or farm wagon manufacture for over 70 years. This band wagon probably was made by Springfield in its Missouri factory.



AUTHORIZED CAPITAL,

40,000 DOLLARS.

Springfield Manufacturing Company.

WARRANTY.

Whereas, Mr. *Charles Seitz* of the County of *Ala.* and State of *Ala.* has purchased of the Springfield Manufacturing Company, Wagon No. *1026* the said Company warrant to the said *Charles Seitz* or the lawful owner of said wagon, that the material and workmanship is of first class quality, and that they will make good any breakage or failure that may occur within one year from this date

Provided, such breakage or failure is caused from any defect in material or workmanship.

A piece of the broken part should be produced for the inspection of the Company or its Agents when claims for repairs are made.

Agent,

H. F. Fellows
ollar 21

The Springfield Wagon Company was among the first in its industry to warrant wagons. The above warranty was issued and signed by Homer F. Fellows in 1876 when the firm was still operating as the Springfield Manufacturing Company.

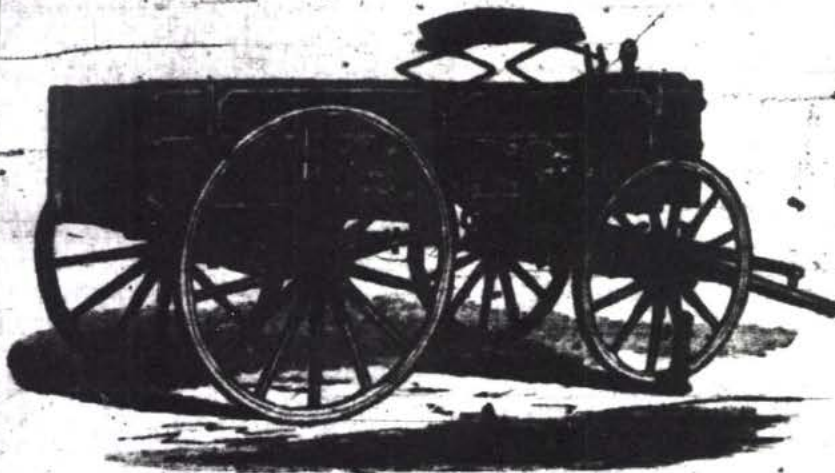


Fellows Mansion, built by Colonel Homer F. Fellows in 1882.



Homer Franklin Fellows at the age of 21 (1852), when he started westward to seek his fortune.

\$500 CHALLENGE.



SPRINGFIELD WAGON.

The Springfield Manufacturing Company will forfeit the sum of
FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS if they do not build the
Strongest and lightest running Wagon sold in this market

Every one knows that the Wheel and Axle constitute the strong parts of a Wagon, consequently they will put up Five Hundred Dollars against a like sum to be put up by any one accepting this challenge, on the following conditions: Each party shall choose a man, and the two chosen shall select a third as an expert, who shall test the wheels according to established rules and usages for such trials. The wheels to be selected by the committee from the ordinary stock offered for sale and the wheel resisting the greatest strain shall be declared victorious and the losing party shall forfeit and pay Five Hundred Dollars to be donated to some charitable or educational institution in this county, to be selected by the committee.

Springfield Manufacturing Co.

H. F. Fellows, Pres't.

Sec'y.

H. F. FELLOWS, Pres't

N. W. FELLOWS, Pres't

F. A. WISHART, Sec'y

E. B. HAYDEN, Treas.

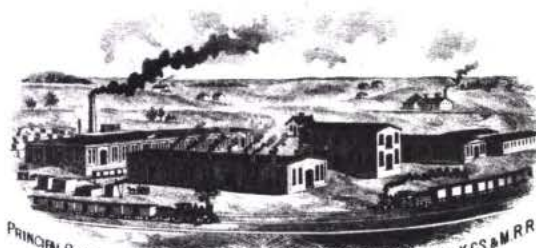
OFFICE OF

SPRINGFIELD WAGON COMPANY.

MANUFACTURERS OF HEAVY & LIGHT

ROAD & FARM WAGONS.

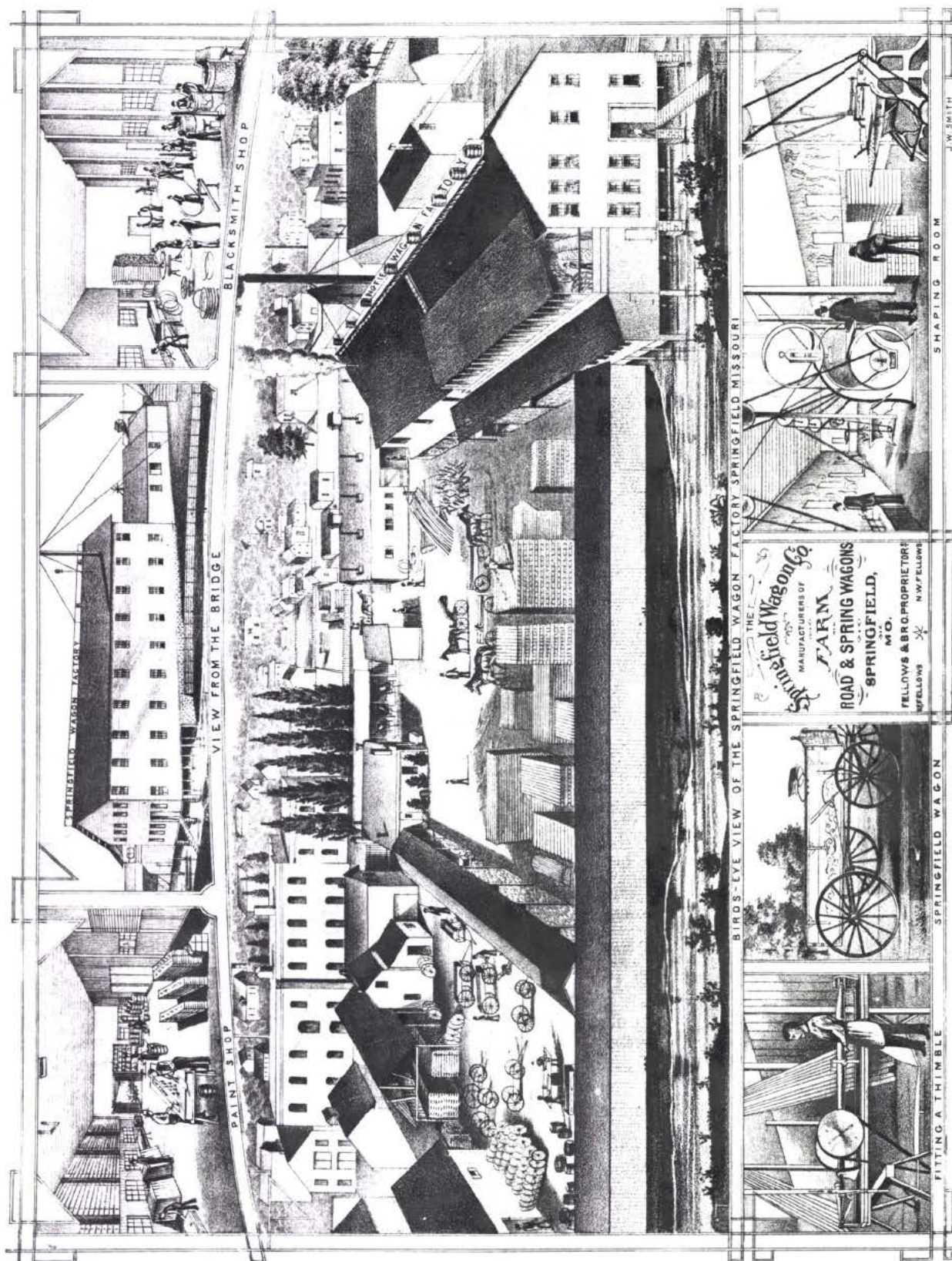
WOOD WORK
 ALWAYS ON HAND
 AND FOR SALE.
 ALSO TENTS
 AND
 WAGON COVERS.



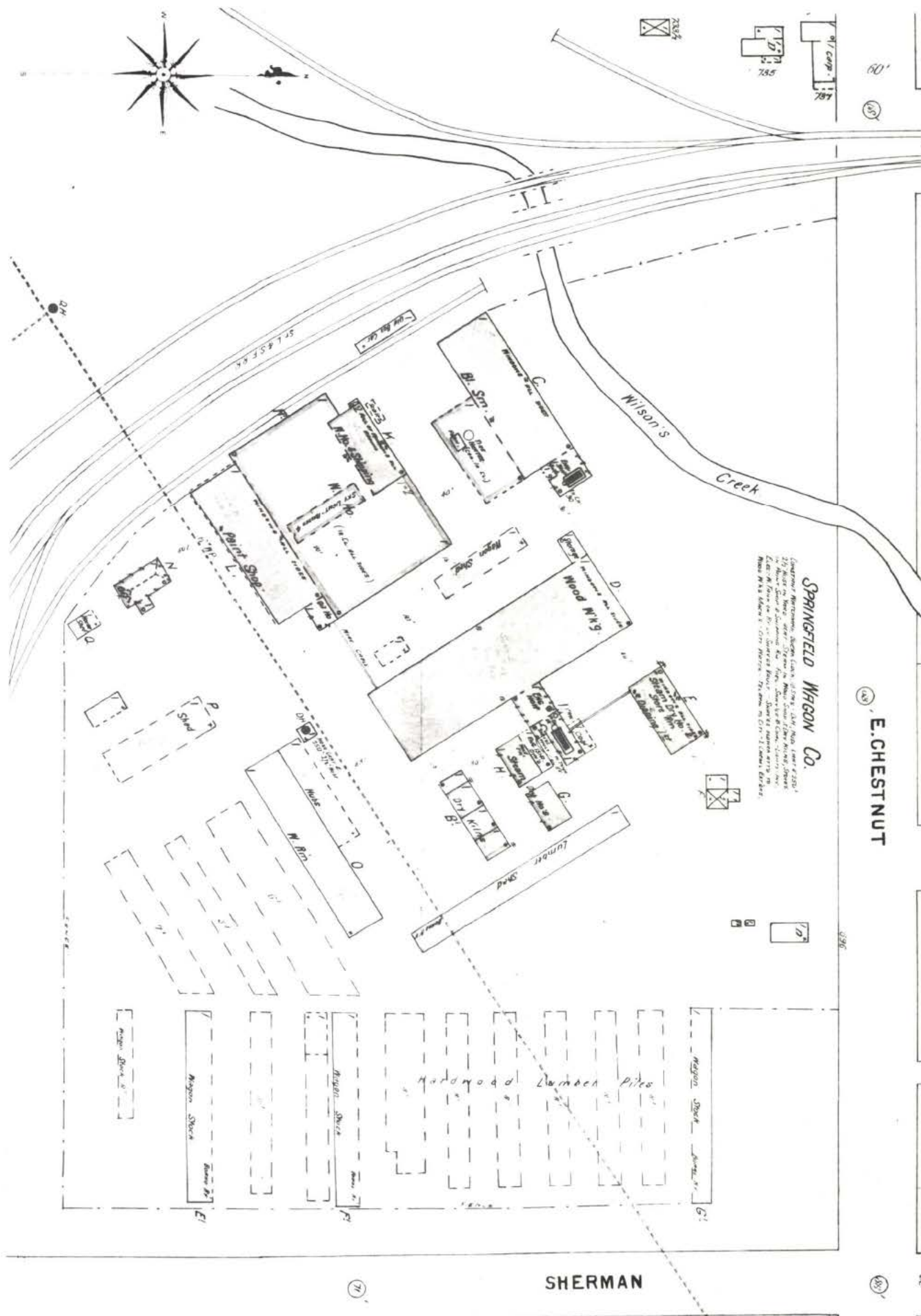
PRINCIPAL OFFICE: MILL ST., NEAR BOONVILLE. WORKS: JUNCTION OF S & S & KCS & M & R R.

Springfield, Mo.

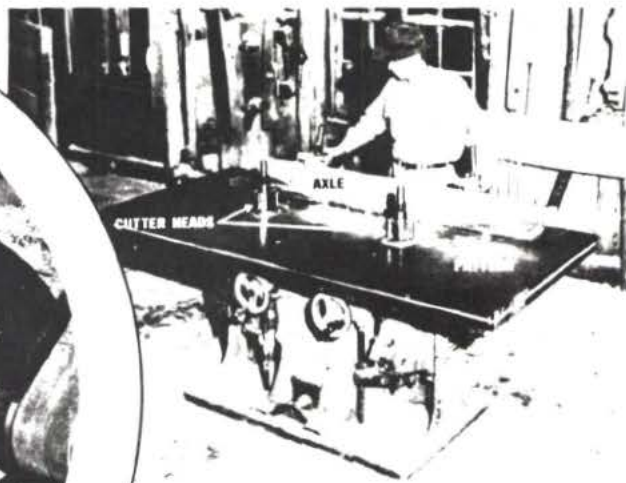
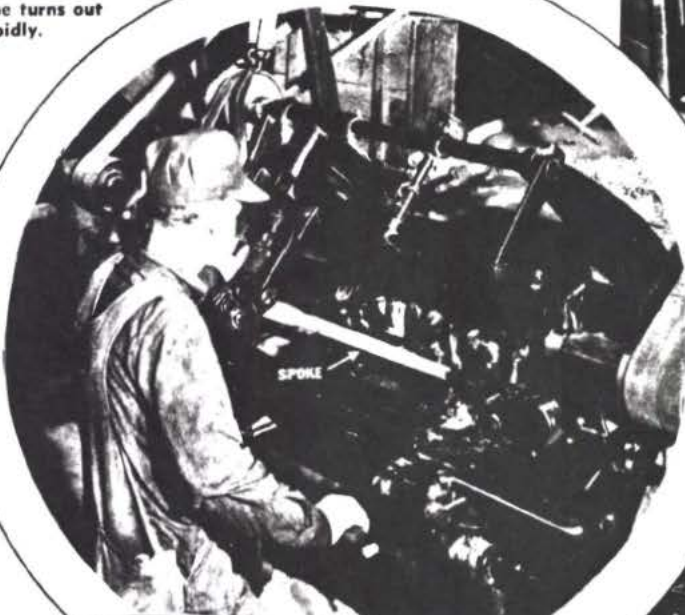
1883



Line drawing of Springfield wagon factory about 1878. Original in possession of Springfield and Greene County Public Libraries.



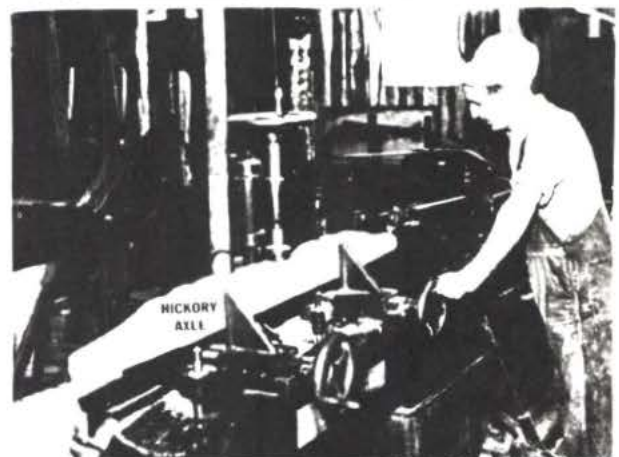
This automatic spoke lathe turns out spokes rapidly.



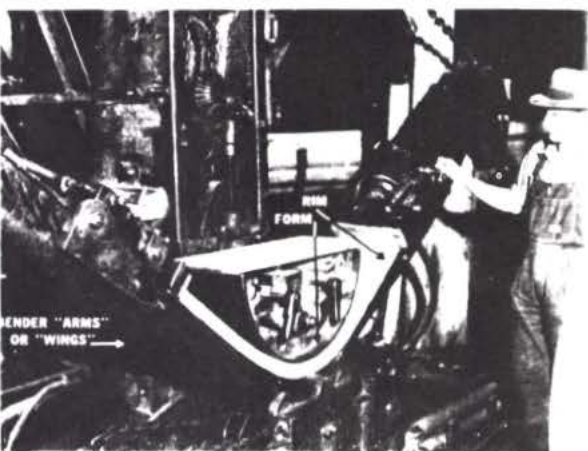
A double-spindle shaper which shapes axles for Springfield wagons.



Above, forcing a steel tire over the felloe of a wagon wheel. This horizontal hydraulic press causes the hub to be pushed upward slightly so as to produce a dished wheel. Below, shaping axle ends to accept cast iron skeins, or wheel bearings.



Testing the finished wheel to see that it runs true.



Wheel felloe sections, after being steamed to soften them, are bent to shape while being supported by a form of flexible steel sheet. The ends of the sheet are pulled toward each other in this machine until the section is semi-circular in shape. It is held in this position for 24 hours while it dries. Afterwards the section will retain its shape.





Springfield Wagon Company office at Springfield factory, built in 1885 — shown as it appeared in 1949.



Springfield Wagon Company shipping department and wagon storage building, Springfield, Missouri, (as it appears today).



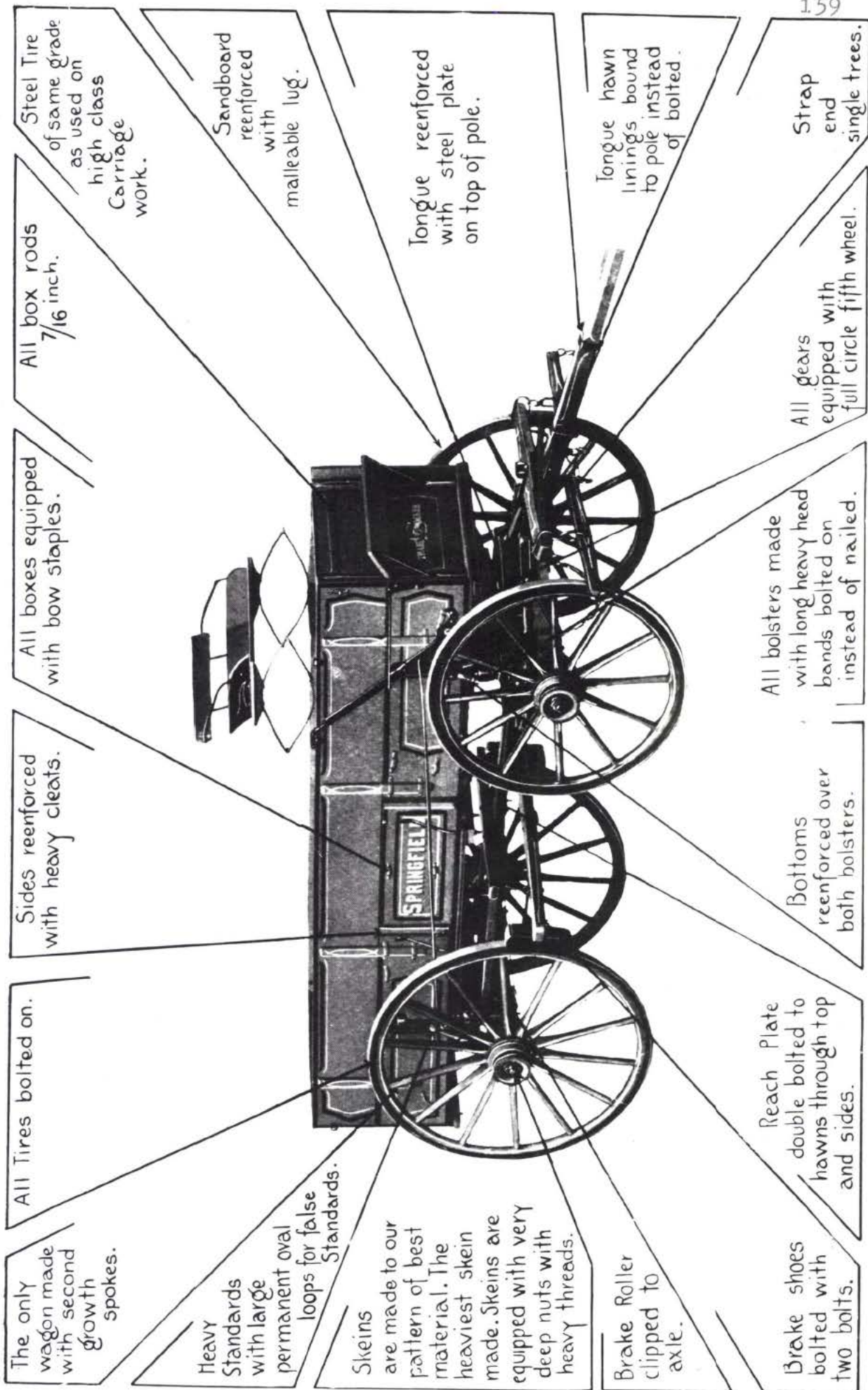
Wagons and trailers of Colonel Tim McCoy's Wild West Show (1938), built by the Springfield Wagon Company. (Photo courtesy of Circus World Museum — Baraboo, Wis.)



U.S. Army Escort Wagon—old type. The Springfield Wagon Company built thousands of these during World War I. (Photo courtesy of Information Service—Ft. Larned, Kan.)



Main paint shop and warehouse at Springfield Wagon Factory (as it appears today).



All Tires bolted on.

Sides reenforced with heavy cleats.

All box rods $7/16$ inch.

Steel Tire of same grade as used on high class Carriage work.

Heavy Standards with large permanent oval loops for false Standards.

Skeins are made to our pattern of best material. The heaviest skein made. Skeins are equipped with very deep nuts with heavy threads.

Brake Roller clipped to axle.

Reach Plate double bolted to hawns through top and sides.

Brake shoes bolted with two bolts.

Bottoms reenforced over both bolsters.

All bolsters made with long heavy head bands bolted on instead of nailed.

All gears equipped with full circle fifth wheel.

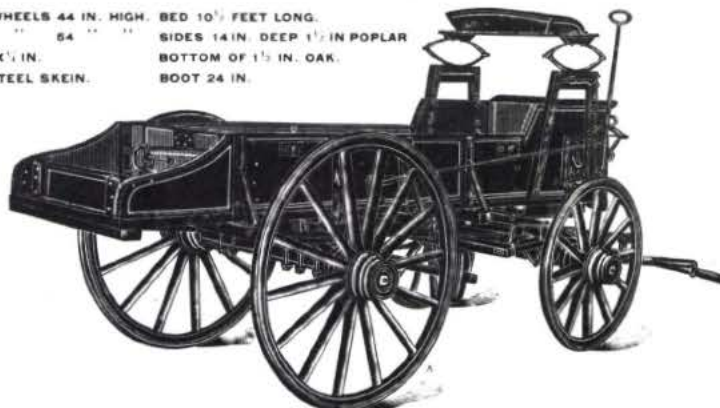
Strap end single trees.

Tongue reenforced with steel plate on top of pole.

Tongue hawn linings bound to pole instead of bolted.

Sandboard reenforced with malleable lug.

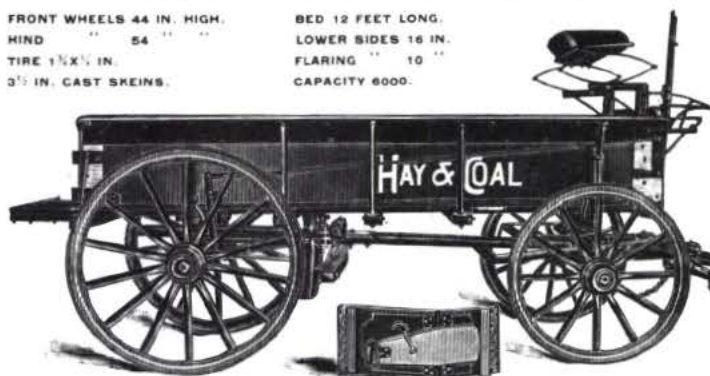
FRONT WHEELS 44 IN. HIGH. BED 10³/₄ FEET LONG.
HIND " 54 " " SIDES 14 IN. DEEP 1¹/₂ IN. POPLAR
TIRE 1¹/₂ X ¹/₂ IN. BOTTOM OF 1¹/₂ IN. OAK.
3¹/₂ IN. STEEL SKEIN. BOOT 24 IN.



Drop Tongue.
Raised Hinge Seat.
Patent End Gate.
Wrought Lock with hand lever.
Price Complete, \$180.00
Gear Brake clipped to axle.
Joints of bottom have iron tongues.
1¹/₂ X ¹/₂ iron let into bottom of side boards to protect from scoop.
Capacity, 6000 pounds.

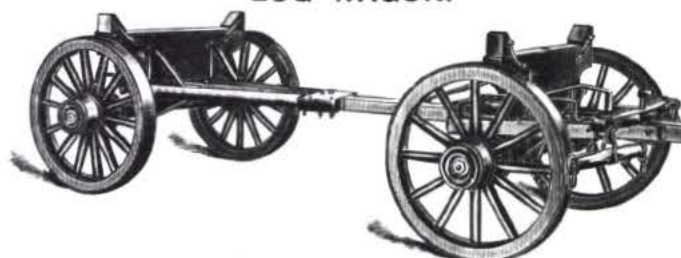
COAL WAGON--WITH STEEL TIRE.

FRONT WHEELS 44 IN. HIGH. BED 12 FEET LONG.
HIND " 54 " " LOWER SIDES 16 IN.
TIRE 1¹/₂ X ¹/₂ IN. FLARING " 10 "
3¹/₂ IN. CAST SKEINS. CAPACITY 6000.



Price Complete, \$180.00
Drop Tongue.
Raised Hinge Seat.
Patent End Gate.
Extension Bottom of 1¹/₂ inch Oak.
Wrought Lock with hand and foot lever.

LOG WAGON.



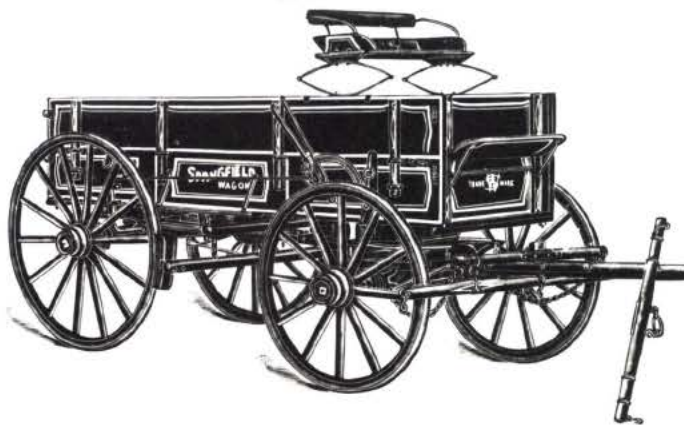
PRICE LIST OF LOG WAGONS.
Complete with Doubletrees, Neck Yoke and Blocks.

SIZE.	TIRE.	CAPACITY.	PRICES.	
			CAST SKEIN	STEEL SKEIN.
3 ¹ / ₂ X 11	2 ¹ / ₂ X ¹ / ₂ inches,	5,000 pounds,	\$110.00	\$120.00
3 ³ / ₄ X 12	3 X ³ / ₄ " "	6,000 " "	135.00	145.00
4 X 12	3 ¹ / ₂ X ³ / ₄ " "	7,500 " "	157.00	170.00
4 ¹ / ₄ X 12	4 X ³ / ₄ " "	8,500 " "	189.00	204.00
4 ¹ / ₂ X 13	4 X ³ / ₄ " "	9,500 " "	221.00	238.00

For each additional ¹/₄ inch in Tire add \$8.00.
For Tail Brakes add \$30.00.
When Doubletrees and Neck Yoke are not wanted \$6.00 off.
Rigged for four horses, with Doubletrees, Spread Chains and Goose Neck, extra, \$12.00

OUR STANDARD FARM WAGON.

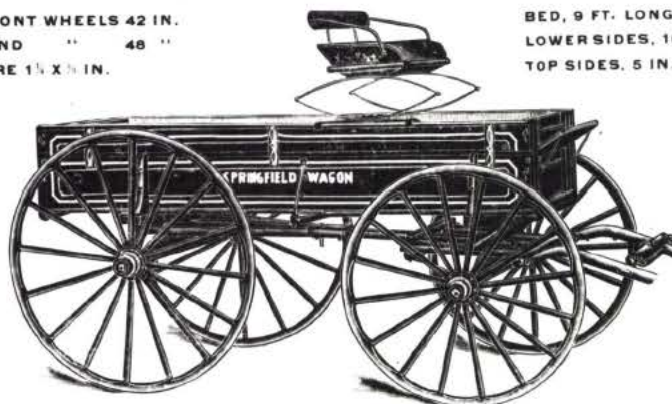
STEEL TIRE.



OUR ONE-HORSE WAGON.

FRONT WHEELS 42 IN.
HIND " 48 "
TIRE $1\frac{1}{2}$ X $\frac{3}{4}$ IN.

BED, 9 FT. LONG.
LOWERSIDES, 10 IN.
TOP SIDES, 5 IN.



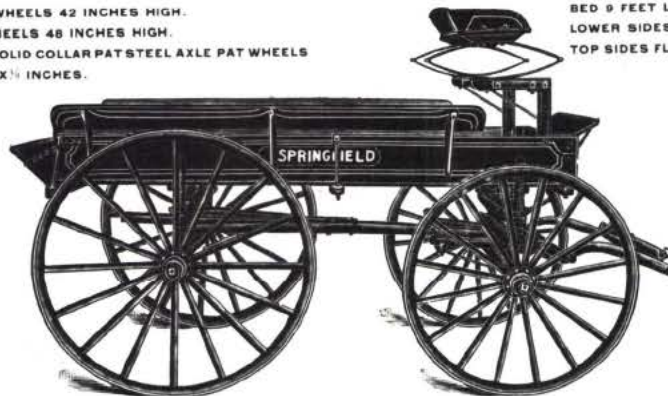
$1\frac{1}{4}$ inch solid collar, patent steel axle, patent wheel, gear only, - - - \$50.00.
Same wagon complete, with body top box, spring seat and shafts, - - - 70.00.

EXTRAS: Pole instead of Shafts, \$3.00.
Pole extra, complete, \$11.00.
Brake extra, complete, \$8.00.
Bolster springs, (see page 14.)

SPRINGFIELD DELIVERY WAGON.

FRONT WHEELS 42 INCHES HIGH.
HIND WHEELS 48 INCHES HIGH.
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ IN. SOLID COLLAR PAT STEEL AXLE PAT WHEELS
TIRE $1\frac{1}{2}$ X $\frac{3}{4}$ INCHES.

BED 9 FEET LONG.
LOWER SIDES 10 IN.
TOP SIDES FLARING 5 IN.



Wagon and raised spring seat, flaring sides, and drop end gate, no brake, - - - \$80.00.

EXTRAS: Brake extra, \$8.00.
Pole instead of shafts, \$3.00.
Pole extra, complete, \$11.00.
Bolster springs 1000 lbs., capacity, (see page 14.)
" " 1500 " " " " " "

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All of the above interviews are on tape in the
author's possession. A copy may be found
in the Springfield Wagon Company Collection.