

LOCAL MANUFACTURING HISTORY

- By Brian Szafranski, Elma, NY

First, thank you to those members who responded to my request for information in the last issue. I was able to obtain info and photos that I didn't already have.

For those who don't know me, I'm the guy who created the website BuffaloPitts.com. I did this when it seemed there was little information available about Buffalo Pitts. I'd been looking for something to do ever since going on disability about nine years ago. I worked at Scott Aviation (now AVOX Systems) in Lancaster for over 20 years. I'm a mechanical engineer and during the last 10 years at Scott I headed the Technical Publications section. I enjoy writing, especially about local manufacturing history. I hope to expand my website to include other local firms, as well as write more short articles for the Flywheel News. I would like to write books in the future; perhaps the first one would be about Buffalo Pitts.

I've noticed that it's difficult to find information on Western NY manufacturers. Sure, the better-known brands (like Pierce-Arrow) are well documented, or even have dedicated clubs. But it seems like we've forgotten many of the other local makers of equipment that are of interest to members of our Association. That's a shame.

The list of forgotten manufacturers from Western NY (and nearby areas) is long, and here are a few examples that I'm aware of. Trucks: Atterbury, Stewart, Thomas. Tractors: Pitts, Hession, Gasport, Birdsall, Waterous. Steamrollers: Buffalo, Iroquois, Waterous. Agricultural Implements: Wiard, Massey-Harris. Cars: Pierce-Arrow, Thomas, and many others. Engines: Buffalo, Olin, Snow. Motorcycles: Emblem, Pierce, Auto-Bi.

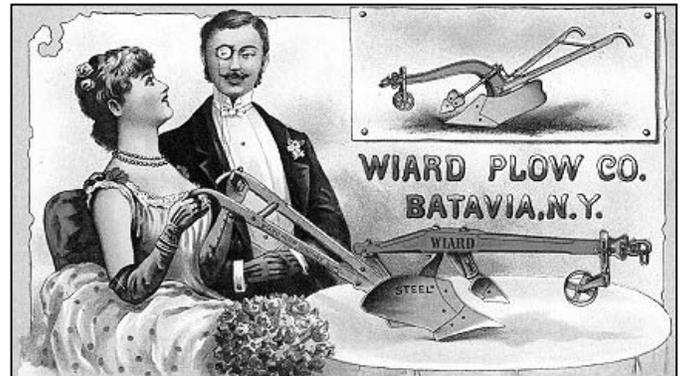
I'm sure I've missed many names, so let me know your favorites, e-mail: Bri@roadrunner.com, phone: (716) 805-0102 (from 7-11 PM), or mail: Brian Szafranski, 1605 Bowen Rd, Elma, NY 14059. Thanks!

BOOKS: Charles H. Wendel has written many books on various subjects, most of which are of interest to association members. Three of his most popular books (but which are out of print) are available new at \$55 each plus postage from: AmericanGasolineEngines.com; or: Andrew Albrecht, 10139 Auburn Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45241; telephone 513-616-5634. After doing a lot of searching, I found that \$55 is less than the cost of the few available used copies listed on the internet!

These 3 books are: "American Industrial Machinery Since 1870" and "American Gasoline Engines Since 1872" Vol. I & II (each vol. is \$55). Tell Andy to "ship via Media Mail" to save on the postage costs.

WIARD PLOW COMPANY

An interesting "forgotten" local manufacturer is the Wiard Plow company (pronounced "WY-ard").

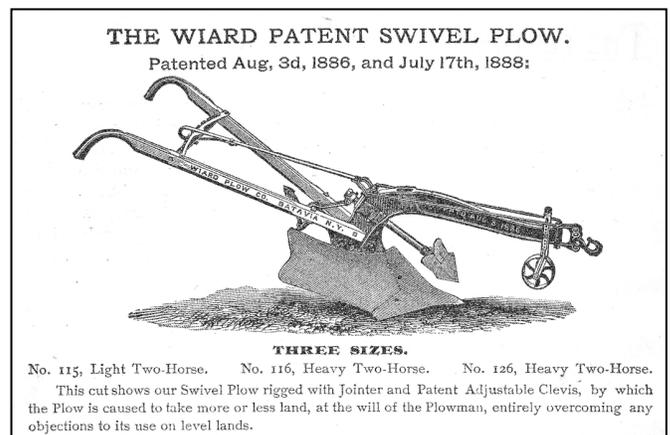


This is one example of the many "Ad Cards" produced by the Wiard Plow Co. - you can often buy them on eBay.

Founder Thomas Wiard (a skilled blacksmith) built his first plow in July 1807 in Avon NY. Initially, thin strips of iron covered the moldboard. A foundry was built in 1817 to manufacture an improved cast-iron plow. In 1876 production moved to Batavia.

Wiard Plow Co. made many types of plows; the 1892 catalog lists 28. Wiard made other farm implements including: harrows, cultivators, weeders, planters and rollers, as well as cast-iron chimney caps. At one time Wiard plows were the #1 seller in America. One of the oldest known Wiard plows is on display at Detroit's Henry Ford Museum (TheHenryFord.org).

When the company closed in 1954 Wiard Plow was considered the oldest plow manufacturer in the county. Unfortunately, on May 10, 2010 the old Wiard building burned to the ground under suspicious circumstances. The vacant building was considered by many to be an important part of Batavia's history.



Wiard published a yearly catalog detailing all their farm implements - here's page 12 from the 1892 catalog.