AMERICAN STEEL & WIRE COMPANY

SUBSIDIARY OF UNITED STATES STEEL CORPORATION

WORCESTER, MASS.

OPERATING DEPARTMENT

March 7, 1935.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East Nineteenth Street,
New York, N.Y.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

Refer, please, to your inquiry of February 12.

While we should like to be as helpful as possible in any such historical work as you are now engaged in, the information available here is only fragmentary, and not only that, but we are surrounded by very definite restrictions in regard to the supplying of data for publication purposes. We have no doubt that when you were gathering the data for your book on the life of Judge Gary, you became acquainted with some of these restrictions, which apply to us and to other subsidiary companies of the U.S.Steel Corporation, on such matters.

Recognizing this situation, we do, however, desire to cooperate as far as possible, and we are enclosing a list which, from our inadequate records, appears to form a fairly complete record of the more important kinds of wire which the Washburn & Moen Manufacturing Company here was making about 1880.

We are unable to state just what kinds of wire constituted our largest items at that time. Possibly they were barbed wire and telegraph wire. We doubt that anybody could question any general statement which you might make on this point.

Neither can we now form any conclusions as to the growth of business here between 1880 and 1898. The only indication of this might be derived from the changes made in capitalization of the local companies between those years. This would not necessarily be a very reliable basis for judging the growth of the wire industry here, but it does present some comparative figures from which you could make your own deductions. Accordingly, we note that the capital stock of Washburn-Moen, which was $1,500,000.00 in 1880 had been increased to $4,000,000.00 in 1898.

Your supposition that the major increases during that period resulted from the growth of telegraph, telephone, and electric light and power industries seems probably, but we have no records to confirm such an impression. We do know that the manufacture of insulated wires for electrical purposes was undertaken here in 1889.

Digital Image, 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

AMERICAN STEEL & WIRE COMPANY

SUBSIDIARY OF UNITED STATES STEEL CORPORATION

WORCESTER, MASS.

OPERATING DEPARTMENT

The effect of the war with Spain on our business is not determinable, and we have no information which would be helpful in regard to this feature.

The two books of views which we loaned you some years ago contained a number of photographs, the publication of which should not result in any unfavorable reaction, and we should like to discuss this further with you, after you have made alternative selections as to those which seem most desirable for your present work. We suggest, however, that you inform us as to the views which you prefer using, and then give us the opportunity of looking into the matter before definite action is taken. We know you will be glad to work with us in this matter.

You probably have a copy of the pamphlet issued some years ago by our Industrial Museum, entitled "Story of Wire in Picture and Product", and you may also have a copy of "The Manufacture of Steel Wire". These pamphlets contain a number of historical references which may be useful to you at this time, and we are enclosing a copy of each of these for your files. We trust that they will be helpful.

In view of the inadequacy of our records for the period which you are now studying, and also taking into consideration the restrictions with which we must comply when discussing such matters for publication, we believe that in the present instance it would be best if in your historical work you would omit the usual credit references which ordinarily are made on such occasions, and which you kindly mentioned in the last paragraph of your letter.

We shall look forward to hearing from you in regard to the photographs which you consider preferable.

Very truly yours,

C. D. Co Chairman

Manager.

F.J.Crosson,
MOC

Enc.

Digital Image, 2009: The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

AMERICAN STEEL & WIRE COMPANY

SUBSIDIARY OF UNITED STATES STEEL CORPORATION

WORCESTER, MASS.

OPERATING DEPARTMENT

LIST OF PRODUCTS WHICH WERE BEING PRODUCED BY
WASHBURN & MOEN COMPANY, WORCESTER, MASS.
ABOUT 1880.

Band Saw Wire
Brush Wire
Bessemer Steel Wire
Flat Wire
Heddle Wire
Card Wire
Hair Pin Wire

Clothes Line Wire
Copper Wire - bare for various mfgrs.
Copper Wire - bare for electrical purposes
Lightning Rod Wire
Signal Wire
Telegraph Wire
Telephone Wires

Lantern Wire
Music Wire
Piano Wire
Lock Wire
Tinned Wires
Galvanized Wires
Spring Wire

Staple Wire
Nail Wire
Tack Wire
Stone Wire
Faggotting Wire
Umbrella Wire
Dress Stay Wire

Crinoline Wire (hoop skirts)
Eye Glass Wire
Eye Guard Wire
Rivet Wire
Screw Wire
Broom Wire
Mattress Wire
Straightened and Cut Round Wires
Bale Ties

Barbed Fence
Clock Springs
Furniture Springs
Watch Springs
Pump Chain
Wire Rope

Digital Image, 2009, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library