

February 19, 1932

Dear Mr. Abbott:

Thank you for your note of February 18th. I am sorry to make you so much trouble but I was suspicious of the paragraphs submitted. I shall appreciate any re-modelling you will give them. Might it not be wise to add a word on your relations to Mr. Young in the Dallas case? I am not attempting to tell the story of that, to me, complicated affair, only to show briefly how in 1912 in Dallas the Stone & Webster interests collided with the General Electric interests and brought Mr. Young to Mr. Coffin's attention.

In order that you may have before you what I have attempted to say I am enclosing the paragraphs referring to this affair.

You are very good, dear Mr. Abbott, to be patient with my inadequate report of your talk. I am finding great difficulty in compressing into a not too long, popular narrative. These intricate business dealings running over so long a period of time. I can only escape serious pitfalls by the kindness of people like yourself.

Thanking you again for the trouble you are taking, believe me

Very sincerely yours

Mr. Gordon Abbott  
17 Court Street  
Boston, Mass.

At the moment he was involved in one of the tangled situations which had begun to come out of the growth of transmission lines taking in small towns and attracting rivals in fields which had been comparatively free of competition.

Stone & Webster had undertaken the organization in Dallas, Texas, of what was known as the Dallas Southern Traction Company and Mr. Young had been busy with the preparatory work involved; - the examination of laws and of charters and franchises; the consideration of various forms of organization; the study of possible ways of financing and operating; the drafting and re-drafting of contracts. While this work was going on a neat competitive problem arose. Stone & Webster concerned themselves, as I have said, only with second class cities - Dallas in this case. The question of a possible extension of the enterprise to other small nearby cities such as Fort Worth was under consideration. Now there had come into the field a company which was looking for still smaller cities and towns to develop. This was the Bond & Share then a General Electric subsidiary. The Bond and Share proposed to develop a number of towns encircling Dallas. In doing this they necessarily cut across proposed developments of Stone & Webster.

It was not long before the two interests were locked in a bitter struggle and were carrying their troubles to court. What makes the confused situation and the way it was handled important in this narrative is the fact that Owen Young conducted his side of the legal battle so successfully that the attention of the head of the General Electric, Charles A. Coffin, sitting back in his office

