

The Crompton & Knowles Loom Works

Worcester witnessed the beginning of the power loom industry. In 1851 George Crompton, under a renewal of the original patent, granted his father fourteen years previously, built the first power loom in this city.

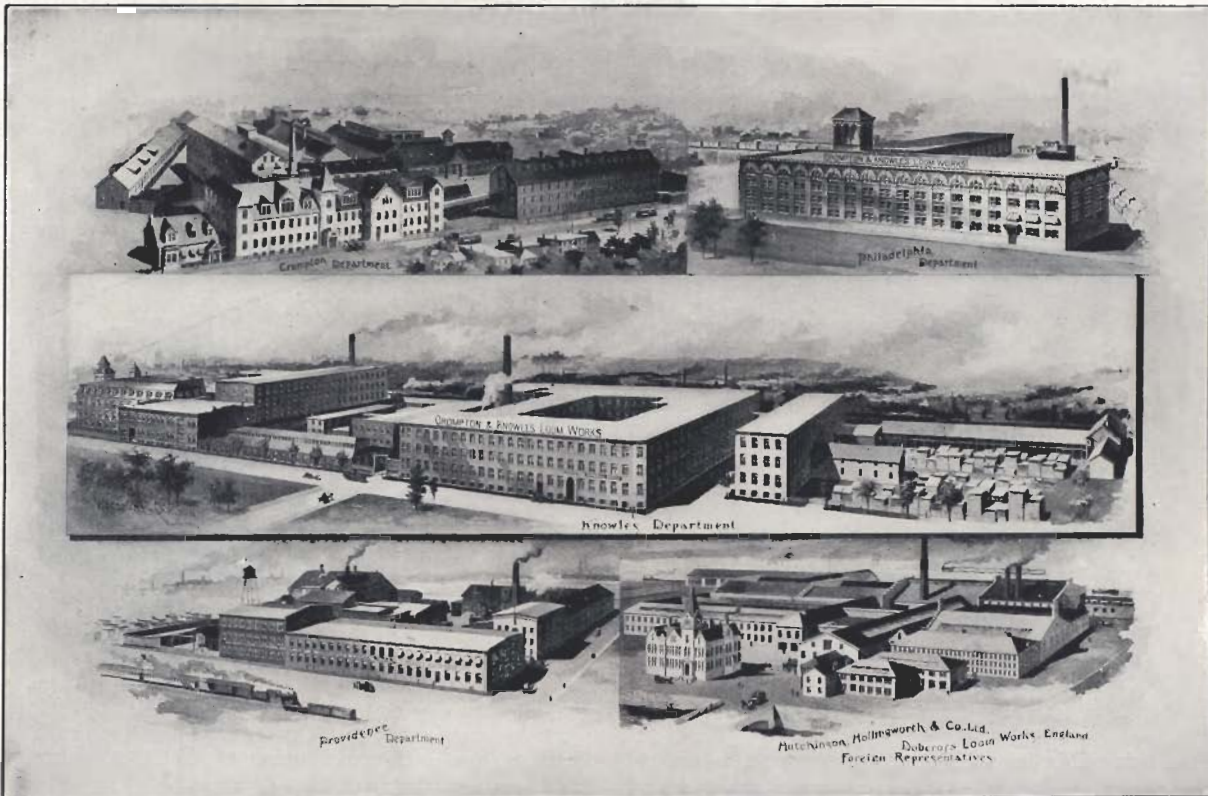
Closely followed him Lucius J. Knowles, having been granted a loom patent in 1856, removed from Warren, Mass., and in company with his brother, Francis B. Knowles, formed a partnership for the building of looms, occupying first the building in Allen Court, which still bears on its east wall the then firm name, L. J. Knowles & Brother.

In 1879, having outgrown their quarters in Allen Court, L. J. Knowles & Brother removed to the junction shop, as it was called, in South Worcester, where for a decade the volume and scope of their business increased to such an extent that

Hollingworth & Company, their looms have been introduced into many of the mills in foreign countries.

During the past year work has been going forward on new buildings and additions to the Grand Street plant, which now extends from Gardner Street to Gates Street, along the line of the Boston & Albany Railroad. New offices, accommodating the necessarily increased force, spacious factory building, and a new foundry, all thoroughly modern and comprising in all about fourteen acres, probably marks the beginning of another epoch in the growth of this corporation.

To let the imagination picture the widest variety of woven fabrics is to gather some idea of the great scope of weaving machinery made necessary to produce them all, for practically every type of woven goods comes from a loom especially



Plants of Crompton & Knowles Prior to Improvements.

they found it again necessary to seek enlarged facilities. Consequently in 1890 the Knowles Loom Works, as they were then called, built and occupied the works at Grand and Tainter Streets.

The broad policy of the management soon became evident in many ways, among them being the purchase of the George W. Stafford Manufacturing Company of Providence, R. I., builders of cotton looms, dobbies and jacquards, this plant, to-day enlarged and nicely equipped, being known as the Providence branch of the corporation.

In 1897, owing to the Crompton and the Knowles Loom Works being united under a single management, the present name of Crompton & Knowles Loom Works was adopted, and soon after this came the purchase of the Gilbert Loom Company, formerly located on Union Street.

A little later, recognizing the advantages of a branch works in closer touch with the carpet and upholstery trade, another branch was established in Philadelphia, Pa.

To-day the looms built by the Crompton & Knowles Loom Works may be found in nearly every mill in the country, and through their English representatives, Messrs. Hutchinson,

designed and constructed for that one particular type of fabric.

Elaborately embroidered silks and intricately patterned rugs are produced on these looms, and millions of yards of duck and khaki, used by the government for the housing and clothing of its army and navy, come from Worcester-built looms. There is no fabric that it is possible to weave that cannot be made on some one of the many types of looms built by this company.

The modern loom, to one unaccustomed to its possibilities and achievements, is one of the really remarkable pieces of machinery. Interweaving the almost countless threads of the warp and filling so rapidly that the eye can hardly follow the shuttle as it flies from end to end, unerringly producing the design from start to finish, and yet so delicate in operation, so safeguarded in its movement, that the breaking of a single one of the threads instantly stops the loom and prevents the damage that might ensue if left unnoticed, this wonderful development of weaving machinery, to which Worcester brains have so largely contributed, has helped make possible the great and prosperous mills in which the country takes such pride.