

## Our National Phrase

### 'The Town That Can't Be Licked'

By Cynthia D. LaBombard, Historian

Ware Historical Society

Disaster in the form of lost industry and all it meant to Ware's economic survival loomed large when in October of 1937 the Treasurer of the Otis Company announced a notice of liquidation and sale of the properties for \$50,000.00. Subject to the approval of company stockholders; three Southern purchasers, who had strong ties with the Alabama Mills, Inc, planned the disposal of in place machinery and research for replacement industry to inhabit the soon to be empty mill buildings. This element of overwhelming surprise mesmerized the townspeople and brought forth immediate action by our Board of Selectmen.

The first action from Select Chair, Frank M.Cebula and members was to appoint a more than twenty member Ware Citizens Committee with Minot C. Wood, Ware Trust Company President as Chair. Also appointed were an Assessor; Highway Surveyor; Bartholomew W. Buckley, Chief of Police; three merchants; the manager of the Casino Theatre; then editor of the Ware River News; John Storrs, Attorney and Town Counsel; two manufacturing representatives, Fire Chief Theodore Deslauriers; Rep. of Public Welfare Board; Treasurer Ware Savings Bank; quiller, Otis Co., Pastor of the East Congregational Church and Donald W. Howe, manufacturer and Secretary of Ware Rotary Club. Their first agenda item was the express opinion that local bankruptcy would occur if new business occupancy could not be found.

Less than two weeks after formation committee members attended their first stockholders meeting with a proposed sale agreement. They also had knowledge that Consolidated Shoe Corp. wanted to locate here. Could they pull a majority vote that would allow a provision for Ware's townspeople to buy the mills if the new owners did not immediately house new industry or if said mills were offered for outright sale? Would they accept more than the \$50,000.00 price tag? The answer: No. However, the consensus was any sales advantage should go to Ware. The official vote then stated the Southern purchasers should be asked to give the Ware Citizens Committee the same opportunity as other vendors to purchase said land, buildings, and waterpower at a fair price. In the meantime, matters of the human kind showed a harsh reality when vast numbers of Otis employees had their jobs terminated; not to mention the dealers who came to purchase yarn and other textile related materials. A century of livelihood----gone.

The focus and positive spirit continued through efforts to obtain the interested shoe business and to reach agreement on moving the textile machinery out and installing the shoe equipment. After much negotiation the Southern owners agreed to sell the empty mills to the people of Ware.. This brought about an 'all in favor' response from the Citizens Committee.

Methods of raising the necessary capital were worked out and a community wide public meeting was scheduled in the Town Hall for November 8, 1937. People crowded the Great Hall and hundreds more stood outside. Details of the negotiations were revealed at last—showcasing the need for purchasing the mills for the interested shoe industry. The newly named corporation needed: capitalization with a price of<sup>1</sup> \$55,000.00; raised cash of \$32,500.00 (\$20,000.00 together with 40% of stock to Southern owners for property price) and \$5,000.00 to clear the weave shed. Any balance would be used as working capital. The Ware Trust Company would issue loans to perspective stock buyers. Additional explanation was addressed in Polish and French languages with notation in all languages that failure to accept said terms would bring about the very real possibility of local industrial employment failure.

Citizens from all walks of life pulled together and voted for industrial survival. Ware Industries was born that night (incorporation came later) and our then *Police Chief Bartholomew Buckley* phrased Ware: “‘The Town That Can't Be Licked.’” His recognition of stout hearted character resonated nationally as proud testament to our town and her people.

*Life* magazine, radio broadcasts, the Associated Press, The Springfield Daily News (The Republican), The Chicago Tribune, The New York Times, playwrights and letter writers among other forms of media have portrayed our place and praised our means of saving face. Destiny through courage prevailed.

---

<sup>1</sup> History of Ware, Massachusetts – 1911-1960 ; Conkey, John Houghton; Conkey, Dorothy Dunham

INCORPORATED UNDER THE LAWS OF  
Massachusetts

NUMBER 287 SHARES 2

**WARE INDUSTRIES, INC., Ware, Mass.**  
Common Stock, Par Value \$5

This Certificate that *Emily Grogan* is the registered owner of Two Shares of the Capital Stock of Ware Industries, Inc.

*transferable only on the books of the Corporation by the holder hereof in person or by Whomever upon surrender of this Certificate properly endorsed.*

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the said Corporation has caused this Certificate to be signed by its duly authorized officers and its Corporate Seal to be hereunto affixed this 17<sup>th</sup> day of February A.D. 1938

*Michael C. Wood* PRES. *William M. Hyde* TREAS.

COPYRIGHT 1924 U.S. No. 489

*The holder hereof hereby sells, assigns and transfers of the Capital Stock represented by the within Certificate and do hereby irrevocably constitute and appoint William M. Hyde Attorney-in-Fact for the said Stock on the books of the within named Corporation and full power of substitution in the premises.*

*Quoted 19*

*in presence of*

*Share*

NOTICE: THE SIGNATURE OF THIS ASSIGNMENT MUST CORRESPOND WITH THE NAME AS WRITTEN ON THE BACK OF THE CERTIFICATE. IN ANY ASSIGNMENT, THE ASSIGNOR OR ASSIGNEE, OR BOTH, MUST SIGN AND PRINT THEIR NAMES AND ADDRESSES.

Ware Industries, Inc.

**CERTIFICATE**  
FOR  
2  
SHARES  
OF  
CAPITAL STOCK

ISSUED TO  
*Emily Grogan*  
DAUGHTER  
*Feb 17, 1938*

For the convenience of stockholders of the Ware Industries, Inc., there are printed herewith the following:

**EXTRACTS FROM BY-LAWS**

**APPRAISAL AND SALE OF SHARES OF CAPITAL STOCK.**  
Any stockholder, including the heirs, assigns, executors or administrators of a deceased stockholder, desiring to sell such stock owned by him or them, shall first offer it to the corporation through the Board of Directors in the manner following: He shall notify the Directors of his desire to sell by notice in writing, which notice shall contain the price at which he is willing to sell and the name of one arbitrator. The Directors shall within thirty days thereafter either accept the offer, or by notice to him in writing name a second arbitrator, and these two shall name a third. It shall then be the duty of the arbitrators to ascertain the value of the stock, and if either party shall neglect or refuse to appear at the hearing appointed by the arbitrators, they may act in the absence of such party.

After the acceptance of the offer, or the report of the arbitrators as to the value of the stock, the Directors acting for the corporation shall have thirty days within which to purchase the same at such valuation, but if at the expiration of thirty days, the corporation shall not have exercised the right so to purchase, the owner of the stock shall be at liberty to dispose of the same in any manner he may see fit.

No shares of stock shall be sold or transferred on the books of the corporation until these provisions have been complied with, but the Board of Directors may in any particular instance waive the requirement.

The Directors shall have the power and it shall be their duty to the corporation under these provisions whenever in their judgment it can be done to the advantage of the corporation and all sales of shares made by the Directors under the aforesaid provisions it shall be their duty to sell to such persons as shall appear to them from their situation and character most likely to promote confidence and stability in the corporation.

**NOTICE OF TRANSFER.**  
In the event a certificate of stock be sold, assigned or transferred, either absolutely or as collateral security, by the record holder thereof, notice thereof by the new owner, assignee or transferee shall be given forthwith to the corporation or such new owner, assignee or transferee shall present the certificate to the corporation for transfer within one month after such sale, assignment or transfer be made, and unless this provision be complied with, the corporation or its officers shall incur no liability to the new owner, assignee or transferee or any successor in title on account of the certificate so sold, assigned or transferred.

**CERTIFICATES LOST, STOLEN OR DESTROYED.**  
When a certificate of stock of the corporation has been lost, stolen or destroyed, the record holder thereof or his legal representative may make written application to the corporation for the issuance of a duplicate of the certificate lost, stolen or destroyed. Thereupon, with the written consent of the Directors of the corporation, he may authorize the corporation at his expense to give public notice of such application by advertising the same at least once a week for three successive weeks in a newspaper published in the Town of Ware. If such certificate shall not be presented to said corporation within thirty days after the date of the first advertisement as aforesaid, the corporation may upon proof that such notice has been given issue a duplicate certificate therefor, and upon delivery of such new certificate, all liability of the corporation on account of the original certificate shall cease.

**CERTIFICATES OF DECEASED STOCKHOLDERS.**  
If a deceased stockholder at the time of his death is the record holder of less than ten (10) shares of the capital stock of the corporation, such shares without the appointment of a legal representative of the deceased person by a court of jurisdiction may be surrendered to the corporation by such person as may appear to the Directors to be equitably entitled thereto and a new certificate in place thereof may be issued to such person, but no certificate shall be issued under this provision until after six months from date of death of the deceased stockholder. All shares of the capital stock of the corporation shall be issued upon the condition that a successor in the shares of a person deceased holding less than ten (10) in number and the issue of new shares in place thereof under this provision shall be a full and complete discharge to the corporation of all liability on account of the shares so surrendered.