



Lowell Innovations

When it came to creating tools for specific purposes, Lowell was no different than other small communities. However, out of all the little developments, a few transformed their industries. The most successful local innovation was the development of sprayers by Root-Lowell Manufacturing Company. Started in 1900, they developed models for every need and were the world's largest supplier of household sprayers during the mid-20th century, making 100,000,000 sprayers between 1946 and 1952.

In the early 1930s, the C.H. Runciman Co. bean elevator installed a primitive electric-eye bean sorter. The machine revolutionized bean handling. By 1941, the factory operated 132 electric-eye pickers of which the smallest "will do the work of five women picking by hand."

In 1950, the Newell Manufacturing Co. was creating toy air guns "known the world around and made to withstand the wear which toys of this type must undergo." Packed with three red ping-pong balls as ammunition, Newell shipped over 300,000 units over the course of the year.

Another local innovation that gained worldwide acclaim around the same time was a portable, multi-use farm machine which could fight frost, spray fruit, dust crops, spread fertilizer and seed grass. Patented by Edwin Potter in 1958, Precision Products was already selling units as far away as Argentina by the mid-1950s.