

HIRAM W. HAYDEN

"In the creation of new industrial techniques and processes Hiram Hayden of Waterbury excelled. The life of New England has been enriched by such personalities - original, purposeful and productive in the true sense."
— Men of New England

A prolific inventor of machine processes and product designs, Hiram Washington Hayden was born on February 10, 1820 in Haydenville, Massachusetts. His father, Joseph Hayden, was an accomplished mechanic who invented the first machine for covering buttons with cloth. He moved with his family to Waterbury shortly after Hiram's birth.

Hiram Hayden was employed from 1841 to 1853 by the Scovill Co. where he was the first to successfully engrave metal buttons, probably due to his great love of art. He was responsible for the manufacture of all the important dies for buttons and medals made by Scovill. Hayden developed new processing methods and the road to quality American brass was opened.

Between 1851 and 1889, Hayden registered 58 patents with the U.S. Patent Office. He is most widely remembered for inventing the process of spinning brass to make rounded objects, an operation first used to make kettles. Numerous other metallurgical innovations are attributed to his mechanical genius.

In 1853, he joined with three other businessmen to form the company of Holmes, Booth and Haydens. Among the inventions he patented were a breech-loading rifle and a breech-loading cannon. The company initially engaged in casting, rolling and drawing brass and copper, and later became a leading manufacturer of kerosene lamps and similar household products.

Hayden's lifelong love for art led him into the development of the daguerreotype. He wrote an unpublished scientific article on this subject in 1851, entitling him to consideration as an independent discoverer of the photographic process. Throughout his life, he continued his studies in photography and etching on copper as well as maintaining an interest in many branches of the fine arts.

When he died on July 18, 1904, Waterbury lost one of its best known residents who was devoted to the city's improvement. He was a major influence in advancing industry and general prosperity in Waterbury.

