

H. A. PITTS'

PRICES AND TERMS

FOR THE SALE OF HIS

THRESHING MACHINES, HORSE POWERS,

AND

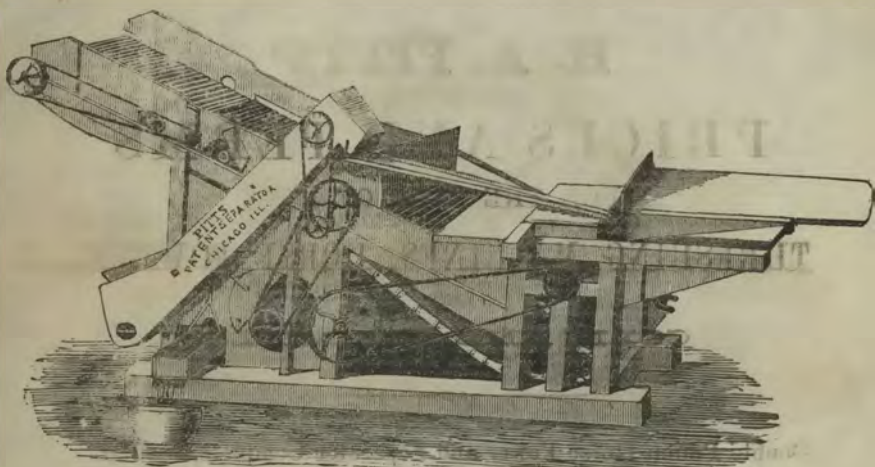
CORN AND COB MILLS.

Double Pinion Horse Power and Separator Complete, without Trucks. Cash, - - -	\$325,00
One-half Cash, balance January 1, 1857, with inter- est at 6 per cent. - - -	350,00
Price of Trucks, with Machines, - - -	30,00
Do. do. Separate, - - -	35,00
Cash will be expected in full for Trucks when purchased.	
Those in want of Machines must furnish good recommend- ations or reference,—and in case these are not satisfac- tory, a good name on the Notes as Security.	
Price of Horse Power, including Tumbling Rod and Jack, Cash, - - -	165,00
Horse Power alone, Cash, - - -	130,00
Separators alone, to run with long belt, and Jack sepa- rate, Cash, - - -	200,00
Separators, with Gear and Short Belt, Cash, - - -	215,00

These Machines are well and substantially made, in every respect. The Separators are all covered over the apron. The bands run upon iron pulleys, and the thresher boxes are composition. The high price of labor, materials, improvements, &c. on the Machines, compel me to adhere strictly to the prices and terms above stated, during the coming Season.

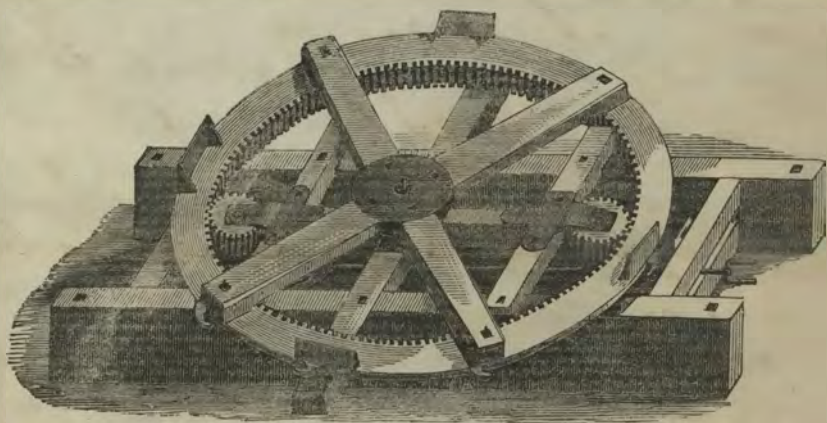
HIRAM A. PITTS.

CHICAGO, *Feb'y* 1, 1856.



PITTS' IMPROVED SEPARATOR.

THE above Cut is a true representation of the Machine made by us. The Band shown running on to the Cylinder Pulley is the Driving Belt of the Machine, and is a great improvement, both in ease and convenience, on the Jack and Long Belt. We have made and sold over One Hundred of the above last year, and not one has failed, to my knowledge, to give entire satisfaction. We intend to improve, this year, by making the Driving Belt of India Rubber, and covering the gear so as to prevent the possibility of accident either by carelessness or ignorance.



PITTS'
DOUBLE PINION HORSE POWER.

THIS Power, for ease, strength, durability, and cheapness of repair, cannot be surpassed.

One Hundred and Ten of them sold the past year, has proved their entire superiority over all others. Great pains and care has been taken to get the best of Material for the Castings to these Powers, the present Season; and none but the best Workmen are employed: consequently Purchasers are certain of a good Machine, in all respects.

I now think my labeled under a great
mistake about both of cylinders.
There are a good lift for 2 strong
more heavy bars running length
ways and 4 heavy bands they
will weigh about 300. it runs as
easy as yours and great deal
steady motions. I feel one of them
most of the time had 3 and 4
bands running in at a time
are short us out of the
power of the feeder to choke these
machines. These powers you
will discover are very strong
with double pinions this makes
the strain come very easy
these come with pointed
rocks in stead of felt this is im-
portant on case and kind the kind
of case of them are drive by
gear and others by short belt
these machines are capable of
threshing all the dry grain one
man can go to them and
in hot weather in August or
September the horse will not
draw much

Hiram A. Pitts, His Firm, and its Successors

Hiram and his identical twin brother, John A. Pitts, shared in inventing and patenting several agricultural items during the 1830s. The most lucrative was for improvements to the separator (threshing machine) which they invented while living in Winthrop, Maine. The patent was granted in December, 1837, although they advertised the separators for sale prior to that date. Their invention was nationally significant in making the harvesting of wheat and other grains more efficient and less labor intensive. From shortly after the patent being granted, the two brothers each operated manufacturing businesses separately while sharing in licensing fees from the separator and their other inventions.

The successor of John's firm eventually became Buffalo Pitts of Buffalo, N.Y. (You have several items of literature listed in the directory for this archive from John Pitts' firm and its successors.)

Until the mid-1840s it appears that Hiram profited from the inventions primarily through licensing the manufacture by others although he apparently also manufactured and sold items himself. For at least one patent (for an endless chain pump) he sold the patent rights outright. For about three years ending in 1851, Hiram worked with a brother-in-law, Nathaniel Hanson, who manufactured separators, horse powers (treadmills) and other equipment under license from the Pitts brothers in Alton, Illinois under the firm name of Hanson's and Emerson's Alton Machine Shop and Iron Foundry. Hiram moved to Chicago in early 1852 where he started his own factory on Jefferson Street at Randolph under the firm name Hiram A. Pitts. He initially listed for sale a patented corn and cob mill and by May, 1852, was advertising the manufacture of separators at his factory. Hiram operated the firm under his name until he died in 1860. His four sons took over the business and it continued as H.A. Pitts' Sons. The factory moved from Chicago to Marseilles, Illinois in 1872, but retained business and sales offices in Chicago until the mid-1880s. Some stories cite the Chicago fire as the reason the factory moved. However, the fire only burned to within two or three blocks of the Pitts' facilities, the factory and offices were not damaged. Other reports cite the high value of usable property following the fire as the reason for moving. This may have affected the schedule for moving, but construction on the new Marseilles plant had started over two years earlier. Shortly after the fire the Pitts' firm rented space to others, including the McNally-Rand firm whose previous business location had burned in the fire.

A February, 1856 catalog claims that over 100 separators had been manufactured and sold in the previous year. At this time it appears that the north half of the west side of the block on Jefferson between Randolph and Washington was the factory and the other half was residential where members of the Pitts' and other families lived. An 1868 article published while the factory was still in Chicago says the firm employed 100 men and used 500 tons of iron and 350,000 feet of hard and soft wood to produced 300 threshers in a year. The main factory was a four story building with about 175 feet frontage on Jefferson Street which was probably built following an October, 1854 fire which destroyed an earlier facility and 25 of the patent grain separators. The total loss in the fire was \$25,000 (approximately \$600,000 in 2010 dollars), was fully insured, and the factory was quickly replaced. There was also a building with 20 feet of frontage on Randolph and 25 feet on Jefferson, and possibly additional buildings fronting on Jefferson between Randolph and Washington in the area which had previously been residential. Eighty-five persons are identified in individual listings as employees of the

Pitts' firm in an 1869 Chicago directory. They include 29 machinists, 37 carpenters, 8 painters, and 12 moulders. It is likely that there were other employees who weren't included in the directory as they would have also employed pattern makers, laborers, clerical staff, and one report of a fire, a night watchman was mentioned. In addition, the four Pitts brothers were employed as managers and officers of the firm. In both locations items were built from raw materials and the factories included a foundry, wood working and machine shops, erection area, and paint shop. After manufacturing moved to Marseilles, an 1879 article said they employed 200 men in a factory covering eight acres. At the Marseilles site the firm had access to river and rail transportation and the power needs of the factory were met by water power with an upper and lower mill race on either side of the area in which a number of factories were located. Today this would be called an industrial park.

Although no evidence of hardships caused by the civil war have been found. three of the four Pitts brothers served for a substantial time in the civil war.

The firm was involved in numerous legal actions, mostly as a claimant in civil cases. The business model used by the firm was to sell items on credit, to be paid for over several years with the firm serving as the lender. Many of the court cases involved defaults by the purchaser. Other cases involved the firm suing or being sued for patent infringement. In one 1860 case, Pitts vs. Magie, the Illinois Supreme Court overruled the lower courts in their decision against the Pitts' firm where someone not associated with the firm obligated the firm for a debt.

The business model of selling on credit resulted in the firm making assignment in November, 1882. Sales were typically made on three-year notes and slow collections resulted in inadequate cash flow. Some newspapers described the assignment as nothing more than an application for extension of loans. Others referred to it as a failure. In December, 1882 creditors agreed to extend credit. In February, 1886, the firm again made an assignment which was also reported as a failure of the firm. It appears that the firm was restructured at this time and the name was changed to Pitts Manufacturing Company.

In 1888 the firm was apparently trying to cut their costs and was looking for a new factory site and shopping for concessions or donations to support a move to the new site. Aurora, Illinois, was mentioned as a site and it appeared that a deal had been struck, but the negotiations failed. In 1890 the factory was moved to Joliet, Illinois, across the river from the prison. In August, 1891, Hiram Pitts' sons' ownership interest in the firm appears to have ended and a firm was incorporated as the Joliet Pitts Company. The Pitts' Manufacturing Works was listed in an 1892 Joliet directory. An October, 1893 article said that the Pitts' Manufacturing Company had moved to Columbia Heights, Illinois. It was projected that about 200 men would be employed. After this, the firm appears to have disappeared from existence.

Starting with the manufacture and sale of the corn and cob mill and thresher in 1852, the firm expanded their offerings to include treadmill and sweep horse powers. These were used to provide power for separators and other machinery before portable steam power was common. Some of the horse powers allowed up to eight horses to be harnessed. They also sold other agricultural equipment, circular saws, and in the late 1880s, Aurelius Pitts patented and the firm manufactured a "road worker" or horse

drawn road grader. In the 1880s the firm added a more expensive thresher and a portable steam engine under the "Blackhawk" trade name.

There is an interesting item in the firm's 1882 catalog. One of the testimonials was from a J. L. Pitts of Milan, Kansas. Joseph L. Pitts was one of Hiram Pitts' four sons and for two or three years in the late 1870s he owned a farm and store in Milan. What isn't made clear in the testimonial is that he was far from an independent source. He was involved with the Pitts' firm for almost the entire period from the mid-1850s until 1890. He and the other brothers were identified in directories as the officers of the firm for much of the time the firm existed. In 1882 he no longer lived in Kansas and at the time the catalog was published Joseph L. Pitts was probably the president of the firm.

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