

# John M. Waddell

John M. Waddell had a remarkable industrial career. In 1888 he founded the John M. Waddell Manufacturing Co. It is said the company was the outgrowth of a domestic incident—one morning, in the absence of the cook, Mr. Waddell found himself in need of ground coffee and began to use the old box coffee mill. This contraption had to be held between your knees and was a struggle to use. This gave him the idea to produce a new and improved coffee grinder which he began producing in 1889.

He later added the manufacture of a cash register (the “Simplex”). The company joined into a partnership with E. L. McClain and others which lasted several years. McClain bought out Waddell, changed the name to the Sun Manufacturing Company and moved it to Columbus. It was later sold to the Columbus Showcase Company.

Waddell then organized the Waddell Wooden Ware Works (incorporated in 1901) which manufactured cash registers, money drawers, coffee mills, animal traps (the Kodak Rat Trap and the Surprise Rat Trap), toys, puzzles, games, novelties and other items. His X-Ray Egg tester was used to check eggs to see if they were fresh.

The Waddell Company also made show cases for stores to display their products for sale. Post Office furniture was an important product of the Waddell Company. Waddell also designed and patented cases for phonographs. It may be best known for its showcases and rural delivery tables and cases.

The Waddell company changed with the times, continuing to make showcases using modern materials such as aluminum and Plexiglas. In the 1990s it was sold to Ghent which continues the business in Greenfield.

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