Samson
Horse Power

East Berkshire, VT 1918-1930

Horses have been used since the 1500s to power machinery. In the early 1800s, most horse powers were still stationary and fitted with simple, low-speed gearing. In the 1830s, hundreds of inventors around the world focused on attempts at automating farm equipment. Reducing the drudgery, difficulty, and danger of farm jobs were the primary goals, accompanied by the potential of providing great wealth for the successful inventor. During this time, inventors evolved many forms of gearing to increase the speed to meet the demand that was required by the new threshing machines and other equipment of the time.

William Samson started William Samson and Company around 1873 on his farm. A few years later, he purchased a cheese factory in Enosburg, Vermont, where he manufactured his patented horsepower treadmills and butter churns. Several years later, the Enosburg plant burned, and he moved his business to East Berkshire, where he operated the plant with his son-in-law, Jasper Rowse. In 1907, Mr. Samson sold the plant to Herbert Pond, who organized the Samson Power and Thresher Company in 1918. They made threshing machines, horse power treadmills, sleds, cow stanchions, wagons, wheelbarrows, and other farm equipment. As the popularity of steam and gas engines grew, horse-powers were no longer needed and the company closed its doors for good in the early 1930s.

An advertisement for the WM. Samson & Co. reads:

"We wish to mention to the public that we are manufacturing a very superior Horse Power, and in asking for a trial of them we are not putting forth a new and untried Machine. For a number of years past we have been watching and testing quite a variety of Powers and among them all, we are sure the Middletown of Gray Horse Power is the best. The only weak part we find is said Power is the lad iron that form the endless cog chine that passes over the pinions on the main shaft. With our Patent Lag Iron, we just complete this well-known machine. The general construction of our Powers in the same as the Gray's. We use the best material in every part. Any one not acquainted with the Power mentioned please send to us for a circular. Just a word here about our Patent Lag Iron. It is made wholly of the best-refined wrought Iron. The mortise above the cogs for receiving the tenon formed on the end of the lag-wood by a saw kerf, is made of one piece of iron and is so joined to cogged part that it generally strengthens it. There are no rivets that can work loose. The lag iron is held firm to the lag by a simple but sure device. These irons will fit the Gray Powers. Any one wishing to examine one can have one free by sending to us. Our One Horse Powers are wider than had commonly been the practice of building. Four our Two Hose Powers we have a gear, that can be furnished at a small cost, to reverse the motion, so that an undershot thresher cylinder can be used if desired. We wish further to be noticed that we are the only company of the kind that deals directly with the farmers or parties using our machines. By so doing they get the agent's commission, that is commonly paid by the purchaser, which is quite an item to notice. Send to us for price list and description of our Powers, Sawing Machines, Threshers and also the Franklin Co. Churns for either power or hand use."

Mangers,
WM. SAMSON
J.A. Rouse

THE
"SAMSON"
POWER

Horse Power now days is used to talk about an engine's power, but the term originally comes from horse-powered machinery. The average draft horse typically was considered too have the tractive power to pull 1/8 of its weight for 20 miles, traveling at 2.5 miles per hour. Thus, a typical 1,500-pound draft horse could develop 33,000 foot pounds per minute, which became defined as one horsepower