

Previous to 1841 Henry Merryfield had been for some time the regular shot-dropper, but in February of this year he fell ill, and Metcalf hired Clark Hickox¹ to come to the tower, learn the business, and take charge of the work; for

revolving on a shaft turned by hand; about this a furnace fire played, thus drying the shot in its downward passage. The shot then passed into a box from which it was dipped into the polishing-barrel, in which was placed a small quantity of black-lead. The next process was the separation of the good from the imperfect globules; the shot slid down a series of inclined planes, separated by small spaces; only the good shot would leap these spaces, the rest would fall into inclined troughs below and be collected for remelting. The shot was next sized by means of sieves, at this time made of buckskin, prepared by hand from pelts purchased from the Indians. These sieves for sizing the shot were about 3 feet long by 2 wide, set in a frame about 4 feet high, so as to be easily slid in and out. A batch of shot would be placed upon the top sieve, which would be shoved back and forth (100 strokes) till all but the coarsest grade of shot was shaken out. Each sieve would be treated in the same way from the top to the bottom, after which those would be emptied that required it; and the same process was repeated until all the shot was sized. The sieves were emptied into small movable bins about 3 feet deep and large enough to take in the entire sieve in emptying. When the shot was to be weighed and sacked, these bins would be rolled up to a table and the sacks filled, weighed on a small grocer's scales and set aside to be sewed up after all the shot was weighed out.

A good run of shot would be 5,000 lbs. and from one-sixth to one-eighth of the shot dropped was perfect. The lead bought for melting was weighed by means of "56's,"—iron weights of 56 lbs. each,—twenty-four of which were owned by the company. The scale beam was a heavy iron bar, at one end of which the lead would be suspended, and at the other the requisite number of "56's."

¹Clark Hickox was born in Randolph Co., Ill., Jan. 12, 1820. At the age of four, he went to live with his grandfather in New York, and in 1828 his family went thither, settling at Syracuse, where he joined them. In 1835 they removed to Wisconsin, and settled at Ridgeway, where their old log house, built in 1836, is still standing. In 1844 Hickox married Rebecca C. Green, whose people came to Wisconsin in 1840. After leaving the Helena tower, he settled on his Ridgeway farm. In 1864 he enlisted and served in the 6th Wisconsin infantry till the close of the War of Secession. He removed from Ridgeway in 1866 to a farm in Wyoming, but returned in June, 1886, to Dodgeville, where he now resides. Hickox Mill, the first grist-mill in Southwestern Wisconsin, was built in 1840 by Hickox's father, for Rolette of Prairie du Chien, and he ran it for many years after.