



### *Southbridge*

The seal problem of Southbridge is a complex one. The one in general use depicts the goddess of plenty, seated and holding an overflowing cornucopia. In the background are factory buildings, while in the foreground is a machine gear mounted with wings, as described to me by my informant. The complete design represents the prosperity which industry has brought there. Above the figure are the words, "Incorporated 1816" and around the edge appears the slogan "Southbridge, Mass., The Eye of the Commonwealth." The reason for this unusual expression is due to the fact that the near-by city of Worcester is known as the "heart" of the Commonwealth; therefore, it was believed to be appropriate to make use of the word "Eye," particularly as here was situated the world's largest optical plant, the American Optical Company. An eyeglass might have been added to the seal very much as an eyeglass was occasionally used as a badge on Myopia Hunt Club programs.

This seal was first used at the hundredth anniversary of Southbridge in 1916 and appears in colors above the stage of the Town Hall auditorium.

It is curious that the legal seal is a simple imprint adopted at the annual meeting in 1889 and reaffirmed by the by-laws of 1929. Possibly it was thought that the industrial one was not in such good taste on account of representing too much capital. The success of the American Optical Company is due primarily to the business ingenuity of the three Wells brothers who have the distinction of having each served the organization for over fifty years.

Southbridge, situated about three miles from Sturbridge, originally comprised Sturbridge, Charlton and Dudley and for some reason was previously known as "Honest Town," a name which has always been lived up to.

They tell the story of James Deneson, a picturesque character of early days, who arrived in the town with only twenty-five cents. While clearing his land he made a temporary home in a cave formed by two large stones leaning against each other until a wolf returned and claimed it by right of priority. One clear, frosty autumn morning he heard the sound of an axe to the north. Deneson signaled by a series of raps on the north side of an oak tree, and was answered. Soon the two young men, the other from Fiske Hill in Sturbridge, Daniel Fiske, met on opposite banks of the Quinebaug River. With a shout and a laugh, so the tale goes, each quickly felled a tree on his side of the river for a bridge, and crossing, met in the middle in the boughs, shook hands and became friends. Deneson is given credit for fathering the school system in Southbridge by offering the use of his barn until haying time, and then his house, for summer schooling in 1742.

There is a legend that where the fire station now stands on Elm Street the first house in Southbridge Center was built by Samuel Freeman in 1744. A descendant, E. B. Freeman, lives in Newton and is much interested in the history of his ancestors.



The enormous elm is said to have been planted by Mrs. Freeman when, returning from a ride, she thrust her riding whip into the ground where munchausenlike it took root.

Another distinguished citizen was Moses Marcy who was the first to establish industry in Southbridge.

Another unusual tale known as the Goodell Indian legend is related by historians. The Goodells lived in a section near the Woodstock line, remote from other habitation. One winter day, corn meal being nearly out, the father of the family left with two bags of grist to be ground at the nearest mill. He expected to be gone one night and possibly two, but a blizzard started almost as soon as he had left which delayed him several days. The evening of the blizzard the door was pushed open and in walked Indians demanding food. Mrs. Goodell brought out what meal she had, not daring to do otherwise, and cooked it. One of the Indians lifted a frightened small boy onto his lap — barefoot in wintertime — and unrolling a bundle of skins, selected one, and stood the lad upon it. He quickly outlined his foot, cut the skin and made it into a pair of moccasins, doing the same for the other children. The Indians slept all that stormy night beside the fire. In the morning they left and returned later with grain and game. That was the beginning of the long friendship between that little band of neighboring Indians who clung to their ancestral home, and the Goodell family.



## *Springfield*

In the lower left-hand quarter of this seal, which was adopted when Springfield became a city in 1852, is a view of the Connecticut River with boats and houses on the bank. In the lower right-hand quarter is the house built by John Pynchon, the son of William Pynchon, one of the founders of Springfield, which was used as a fort for protection against the Indians. Above, nearly the whole seal is occupied by a view of a railroad train passing out of the station as it was in the early times. This was then the Western Railroad which was later to become the Boston & Albany as we know it today. The upper part of the seal is the U. S. Arsenal. The railroad and the river were put in to depict commerce by both methods of conveyance although river navigation has never become a reality.

Originally called Agawam (now the name of a beautiful town near by), when settled by a dozen families from Roxbury, Massachusetts, led by the stout-hearted and strong-willed