



# Ingenious Machinists: Two Inventive Lives from the American Industrial Revolution (Excelsior Editions)

*Anthony J. Connors*

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## **Ingenious Machinists: Two Inventive Lives from the American Industrial Revolution (Excelsior Editions)** Anthony J. Connors

*Uses the stories of two inventors who took different paths to examine the early industrial revolution in New York and New England.*

*Ingenious Machinists* recounts the early development of industrialization in New England and New York through the lives of two prominent innovators whose work advanced the transformation to factory work and corporations, the rise of the middle class, and other momentous changes in nineteenth-century America. Paul Moody chose a secure path as a corporate engineer in the Waltham-Lowell system that both rewarded and constrained his career. David Wilkinson was a risk-taking entrepreneur from Rhode Island who went bankrupt and relocated to Cohoes, New York, where he was instrumental in that city's early industrial development. Anthony J. Connors writes not just a history of technological innovation and business development, but also two interwoven stories about these inventors. He shows the textile industry not in its decline, but in its days of great social and economic promise. It is a story of the social consequences of new technology and the risks and rewards of the exhilarating, but unsettling, early years of industrial capitalism.

“Historians interested in this late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century period will find that this dual biography brings to their attention machinists who played key roles in textile manufacturing, arguably the nation's first major industry. General readers will find a broad interpretation of life in southern New England, and to a lesser extent the Albany region of New York state, from the perspective of early industrial history.” — *Journal of Economic History*

“David Wilkinson and Paul Moody have long deserved full biographies. By comparing the careers of two notable figures and including a wealth of material about the people around them, Connors gives us a much more detailed, varied, and realistic image of life in industrial America than we have seen before. This is social, technological, business, and economic history at its best, all tied together in a compelling dual biography. The book will fascinate general readers with an interest in history or biography, but it will also appeal strongly to specialists in many fields.” — Patrick M. Malone, author of *Waterpower in Lowell: Engineering and Industry in Nineteenth-Century America*

Anthony J. Connors is an independent historian and the editor of the first volume of *Conflicts in American History: A Documentary Encyclopedia*. He lives in Westport, Massachusetts.

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