

Temple & Co. Curtain Roll
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Ansel French Temple was born in the Dorchester area of Boston on 14 July 1842. His first job was as a clerk in a mercantile. In 1868 he went to Milwaukee and engaged in wholesale clothing. In the fall of that year, he became interested in the manufacturing of curtain rollers. Next, he can be found in Grand Haven from which he left in 1872 to come to Montague.

Shortly after arriving, the firm of Temple & Company, comprised of E. P. Ferry and A. F. Temple, was formed in 1872 for the manufacturing of curtain rollers. The venture lasted for five years before Mr. Ferry withdrew from the firm and Mr. Temple became sole owner until 1879.

In addition to the curtain rollers, they were also making curtain sticks and map mountings in 1874.

In January 1876, they gave up their office to add more machinery and built a new office and warehouse in the Spring of the year.

The buildings that made up Temple & Company faced Knudson Street at the southwest corner of Knudson and Ferry streets.

What appears in the picture to be small turrets on the roof of the warehouse are barrels. These were kept full of water. In case of fire, men went to the roof and dumped the water on the fire. This was a common site on a lot of the early mill buildings.

March 1877, many large orders were being filled and shipped to San Francisco and other places.

On 15 June 1877, it was reported that Temple & Co. was building four buildings 100 feet long and 47 feet wide for storing rollers and map mountings.

Also, during the month of June, they shipped a carload of mop handles by the steamer Tempest to Chicago.

In December 1877, A. F. Temple had a telegraph line erected between the factory and the depot for their convenience in sending and receiving dispatches.

In April 1878, they were building larger additions to their sheds. And from the first of January to the first of April, it was reported that they sold \$14,000 worth of curtain rolls and other fixtures.

About half past four on Wednesday afternoon, December 11, 1878, the alarm of fire was heard in town. It proved to be located at the A. F. Temple & Company factory. Only a few minutes elapsed after the alarm was sounded and nearly the entire roof was in flames before the engines could get to the main building. It was beyond hope of saving, so attention was focused on saving the warehouse and nearby structures. Mr. Bowen's barn and one or two adjoining sheds caught fire but were quickly extinguished. The loss was estimated at \$40,000 with no insurance. The owners were not discouraged, however, as they had purchased some used equipment to start another factory which was stored in the warehouse that was saved.

A new factory was constructed in January 1879, and a joint stock company was formed which was known as the Montague Curtain Roll and Handle Factory.

In February 1879 it was reported that A. F. Temple was in the East arranging matters relating to his new curtain roll factory, which he was planning to erect somewhere in Muskegon. He had received several liberal offers from parties there.

On May 16, 1879, fire once again destroyed the factory, dry kilns and storehouses valued at \$25,000 and insured for \$15,000. Also destroyed were a nearby boarding house owned by D. C. Bowen and some feed and grain belonging to Jackson & Raby that was stored at the Boarding House. At the time, the company employed 60 men and boys who were now all unemployed.

Following the second fire, A. F. Temple moved his business to Muskegon. His factory operated there until 1884, when it too was destroyed by fire. It was rebuilt and in 1892 was sold to the Stewart Hartshorn Company. Mr. Temple had retained his interest in the company and became Manager of the western branch of the firm.

Temple had married Mary Langworthy of Milwaukee in December 1871. They had three children: Belle, Eleanore "Ella" and William. They survived him along with his wife when he died at his home on Washington Street in Muskegon on 24 December 1914. He was 72 years old. His wife Mary continued to live in the house, along with her maid, until her death in March 1931.