

# GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY

GENERAL OFFICE SCHENECTADY, N.Y.



1635 Broadway  
FORT WAYNE, IND.

August 23, 1927.

My dear Mr. Hammond:-

Your undertaking--the gathering together of historical recollections of the early electric light workers--is a welcome opportunity to me to call up my own activities of those distant days. As I look back over the last fifty years, I am most profoundly impressed with all that has been accomplished in such a comparatively short time.

It seems only a few years ago since my old friend, James B. Fuller, built his first dynamo. That was in 1876, and in the following year it was being demonstrated in the shop of the Brady Manufacturing Company, in Brooklyn, where I was shop foreman.

It was the first electric machine I had ever seen. Naturally it made a lasting impression. It got me interested in the idea. I learned all I could about it and did a lot of reading about electricity and physics besides. I finally got the idea that the Fuller machine was too noisy, too large for its output, got too hot in operation, and required a large amount of power to drive it.

These ideas made me think I could design a dynamo myself. I confidently started out to do so. I did not realize all that it would involve. The problems were intricate, and when one failure followed another, it was discouraging, almost heartbreaking. However, I kept on because of the optimism of youth. I put in two years toiling over that dynamo. But success came at last, and I had the joy of seeing it light an arc lamp, and of knowing that it was lacking in many of the weaknesses which I had noticed in the Fuller machine.

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I had a comparatively small, light machine, not requiring too much power, and before I had finished experimenting I had a dynamo that operated perfectly, producing constant current at voltages as high as 7500. No other machine of the period could do that. I think I may refer with some pride to the record of the Wood dynamos which for thirty-seven years remained unchanged in fundamental design.

I count it one of the greatest privileges of my life to have been identified with electrical development--which has contributed vastly to the common good of mankind, has changed the whole aspect of modern life, and has become indispensable to our daily affairs. I would scarcely have dared predict, in 1877, that such colossal changes would come to pass, through the developments that electric lights first started.

Yours very truly,

*James J. Wood*

Mr. J. W. Hammond,  
General Electric Co.,  
News Bureau,  
Schenectady, N. Y.