Ezra Brockway Ely (1839-1894) began his career with the Delaware & Raritan towing of the Camden & Amboy Railroad. He later had charge of the South Amboy coal wharves of the

Subsequently he went into the business himself, as B. F. Ely & Co. in 1867, and then as E. B. Ely & Co.
The Beaver Meadow colliery was opened by E. B. Ely & Co. in 1872. The company built a large breaker but were not very successful. They sold the operation to Coxe Brothers & Co. in 1881.

“E. B. & S. W. Ely, Agents,” became the sales arm of Coxe Bros. & Co. in 1877. They established sales offices in Boston, Buffalo, New York, Chicago, Milwaukee and Philadelphia. This continued until Ezra was made a Partner of Cross Creek Coal, and President of Coxe Bros. & Co in 1893.