#### HIMA REDDY

# THE TRADING METHODOLOGIES OF



A GUIDE TO BUILDING YOUR TECHNICAL ANALYSIS TOOLBOX

# The Trading Methodologies of W.D. Gann



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A Guide to Building Your Technical Analysis Toolbox

Hima Reddy

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### For my father, Pandu R. Tadoori



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### About the Author

Hima Reddy, CMT, was first introduced to technical analysis, and to the works of W.D. Gann, during her high school years by her father, who has had a passion for trading and the markets since the early 1980s. However, it wasn't until after she completed an undergraduate Finance degree at Indiana University's Kelley School of Business, and returned to her home state of New York in 2001, that she immersed herself in the markets. She simultaneously volunteered as a sponsorship coordinator for several Market Technicians Association conferences, traded equity and commodity futures under the tutelage and guidance of her father, and completed the Chartered Market Technician certification. In 2006, she joined Informa Global Markets, an independent financial research firm providing live, 24-hour market analysis. As Senior Technical Analyst, she was responsible for producing timely and accurate short-term technical analysis and trading strategies for fixed income and FX markets. With analysis ranging through multiple timeframes, her team also prepared written updates covering longer-term trends. Hima's "guru" has always been Gann—the first market analysis book she ever studied in-depth was How to Make Profits in Commodities—and to this day that is her go-to guide to the markets. Since 2011 she has returned to trading independently and continues to write about the financial markets. Her primary methods of technical analysis include pattern recognition and time duration relationships within markets based on Gann's methodology, momentum assessment through the use of the Relative Strength Index (RSI), Fibonacci relationships, and moving average systems including the use of channels for trade management. Hima now resides with her husband in Baltimore, Maryland.



# Foreword

Over the years, many questions have been asked about W.D. Gann and his trading system. Does it work? How much time do I have to spend before I trade? Can I make money? Where do I begin? I believe the best question of all is, "Which one of Gann's books can I read that will teach me how to trade?" The answer is, *they all will*. However, never has a more worthy book exploring Gann's been written for beginners or intermediate traders as this one.

To be a successful trader, you need to know the rules that have stood the test of time, a bit about the man who created them, and about the author who wrote this book.

Hima Reddy has provided us with the "missing link" to W.D. Gann's trading methods. In this book, she has laid out the basic plans step by step, along with examples, which can be easily followed by anyone with an interest in learning the potential profit areas in trading.

Reddy is an extremely talented and determined person. She is well-qualified, with several years working as a professional in the financial world. I first met her at the W.D. Gann Experience Trading Seminar in 2003. I could see that she possessed the knowledge and determination it takes to be a successful market trader.

In the trading world, it seems as if everyone has heard of W.D. Gann, one of the most successful traders and market forecasters of all time. For more than 50 years, the accuracy of his forecasts and his trading successes stunned the commodities and securities world. He became one of the mystic traders of his time, which earned him the title "Guru of Wall Street." A prolific chartist, analyst, and writer, Gann recorded his methods and systems of trading in books and

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courses that are today among the most well-known and sought-after books on market trading.

The Trading Methodologies of W.D. Gann: A Guide to Building Your Technical Analysis Tool Box is a solid, beginning stepping stone you can count on. This book will open your mind to new ideas that can be extremely valuable to you financially.

Reddy has openly shared her goals and the path you must take to achieve yours. She is more than willing to share with those who are receptive.

Her answers are always words of encouragement: "Keep going."

#### Nikki Jones

Lambert-Gann Publishing Company

## **Preface**

"Life affords no greater pleasure than that of helping others who are trying to help themselves."

-W. D. Gann<sup>1</sup>

When I was 16 years old, I was doing chemistry homework one night and stopped in my father's office to get some assistance with my assignment. I saw my father studying a graph of some sort displayed on his computer screen. I asked him what he was looking at, and he said it was a chart plotting the changes in a stock price; he was using the chart to help him trade the stock. When I asked how he was doing that, he explained that he was using the mathematical relationships present in the stock's price history to help him determine whether the price of the stock would likely go up or down so that he could buy or sell shares of the stock accordingly.

I was intrigued. (I've always been a "math geek," so that wasn't surprising.) I told my father that I wanted to know more about this type of financial analysis. I asked him about the possibilities of learning more about it in college, and he told me that the subject was not very popular and that I likely would not come across it while at school. However, he did offer to help me learn about trading through books and by following his stock charts. Over the next few months, he gave me his old edition (printed in 1976) of Gann's *How to Make Profits Trading in Commodities*. He told me to read that book over and over and glean Gann's methods from it. Seventeen years later, he gives me

W. D. Gann, How to Make Profits Trading in Commodities (Pomeroy, WA: Lambert-Gann, 2009), Foreword.

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the same advice—keep studying the works of Gann's great mind and incorporate what I learn into my own trading plan.

Back when I was in high school and college, as a young person with no experience with the markets, I had to teach myself the methods presented in Gann's works. I did this by synthesizing the concepts into smaller pieces that I could grasp. With knowledge gained through these smaller tenets, I annotated countless charts both on my computer and by hand. I then synthesized into my own trading plan the buy and sell signals and trade management concepts that I understood and witnessed, and I continued to collect examples of charts that illustrated the relating theories. I even began to create market newsletters for myself, focusing on one security at a time and looking at its key price points. This was all to help me better understand Gann's main points and methods so that I could profitably apply them to my trading.

I eventually obtained my Chartered Market Technician (CMT) designation, administered by the Market Technicians Association (www.mta.org). I then worked as a professional technical analyst for several years. However, what I learned from Gann's teachings has remained my prime trading guide.

The chapters ahead contain my humble attempt to present my self-taught interpretation of some of Gann's major works. His writings are among the most esoterically written trading and investing materials out there. However, over the course of my study, I have been able to make them my own. Hopefully, the research I've done into Gann's trading methodology will enable you to grasp the concepts quickly and incorporate them immediately into your own investing/trading.

Anyone who has looked at Gann's works sees that he used many chart examples to illustrate his trading rules and philosophies. I do the same, and I expand the realm to include securities that many of us observe regularly. I apply the trading rules and ideas to modern charts. You'll likely see that, among the charts I use, many of them

are drawn from market observations made *after* I began conducting research for this book (December 2010).

I hope you, the reader, find that this helps you improve your own trading toolkit. My goal is not to make you a Gann expert through this book alone: I believe that trading education is an ongoing process and can't come from any one person or resource. I do, however, hope that I am speaking to the part of you that is akin to the 16-year-old I once was—eager to venture into a deeper study of Gann's materials for the most complete approach to this master's investing methodologies.



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#### The Work of W.D. Gann

#### **Market Predictions**

As an author, I want to give you a reason to read this book that goes beyond my assurances that the material is useful. So I want to begin by referring you to some of Gann's greatest market predictions and how he profited from those moves. Throughout Gann's works, he advised his students to use all their trading and forecasting tools all the time to discover the forces at work in any given market. Therefore, sharing his forecasting/trading successes should give you confidence that the information ahead in this book will help improve your own investing methods.

One of the most concise and publicly accessible records of Gann's market predictions is an article written by Richard D. Wyckoff in December 1909, titled "William D. Gann: An Operator Whose Science and Ability Place Him in the Front Rank—His Remarkable Predictions and Trading Record." The article was published in Volume 5 (Number 2) of the *Ticker and Investment Digest*, a very influential stock market publication at the time.

The first part of the article directly explores Gann's general methods of market analysis. Later in the article, Wyckoff shares the findings of William E. Gilley, who was brought in to validate the success (or failure) of Gann's methods. Gilley was an Inspector of Imports in New York with 25 years of experience with the markets. During the

time that Gilley observed Gann, he watched Gann make 286 trades. Of those, 264 were winning trades, for a success rate of 92 percent!<sup>1</sup>

Above all, Gilley documented a series of predictions that Gann made during October 1909. Some of Gann's more remarkable predictions are as follows:

#### **Union Pacific (stock)**

"In 1908 when Union Pacific was 168 1/8, he told me that it would not touch 169 before it had a good break. We sold it short all the way down to 152 3/8, covering on the weak spots and putting it out again on the rallies, securing a 23 points profit out of an eighteen-point move."

#### **United States Steel (stock)**

"He came to me when United States Steel was selling around 50 and said 'This Steel will run up from 58 but it will not sell at 59. From there it should break 16 3/4 points.' We sold it short around 58 3/8 with a stop at 59. The highest it went was 58 3/4. From there it declined to 41 1/4 - 17 1/2 points."

#### Wheat (commodity futures)

"At another time wheat was selling at about 89¢. He predicted that the May option would sell at \$1.35. We bought it and made large profits on the way up. It actually touched \$1.35 1/2."

#### Wheat

"One of the most astonishing calculations made by Mr. Gann was during last summer (1909) when he predicted that September wheat would sell at \$1.20. This meant that it must touch that figure before the end of the month of September. At twelve o'clock, Chicago time, on September 30th (the last day) the option was selling below \$1.08, and it looked as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Natural Squares Calculator course workbook (Pomeroy, WA: Lambert-Gann, 2002), 10–12.

though his prediction would not be fulfilled. Mr. Gann said 'If it does not touch \$1.20 by the close of the market it will prove that there is something wrong with my whole method of calculation. I do not care what price it is now, it must go there.' It is common history that September wheat surprised the whole country by selling at \$1.20 and no higher in the very last hour of the trading, closing at that figure."

#### **United States Steel**

"In our presence Mr. Gann sold Steel common short at 94 7/8, saying that it would not go to 95. It did not.

On a drive which occurred during the week ending October 29th, Mr. Gann bought Steel common at 86 1/4, saying that it would not go to 86. The lowest it sold was 86 1/8."

I hope that Gilley's observations presented within the context of Wyckoff's article have brought your attention to what Gann was able to accomplish investing in the markets. Gann dedicated his life's work to understanding the markets and the principles that govern them, and it is no small feat to have such insight. This is why what Gann had to share through his books and courses is of such great value. The lessons taught in those pages are among the tools he used to master the market as he did.

#### **Publications**

W.D. Gann wrote several books. Of these, five open with a portrait of Gann. Every time I see one of those portraits, I feel that his expression conveys the following—"Trading is serious business. Get ready to work hard and come out a more successful trader on the other side." To impart his trading wisdom, Gann published the following titles:

- Truth of the Stock Tape (1923)
- Tunnel Thru the Air (1927)
- Wall Street Stock Selector (1930)
- New Stock Trend Detector (1936)
- How to Make Profits Trading in Puts and Calls (1937)
- Face Facts America (1940)
- How to Make Profits Trading in Commodities (1941)
- 45 Years in Wall Street (1949)
- *Magic Word* (1950)

He also put together market courses. Both his Stock Market Course and his greater Master Commodity Course were ready for purchase by 1950—the Stock Course for \$2,500, and the Commodity course for \$5,000. According to the U.S. Inflation Calculator (www. usinflationcalculator.com), in today's dollars, those values equate to more than \$23,800 and \$47,700, respectively!

All these books and courses are available for purchase through the Lambert-Gann Publishing Company (www.wdgann.com). Generally, experts recommend studying Gann's works in the order in which he wrote them. All his books present trading tools and ideas that can be directly applied to the markets. However, I focus primarily on How to Make Profits Trading in Commodities because it is the book my father first handed me when introducing me to Gann's works. I asked my father why he chose this particular book, and he said he had come to learn that it clearly delineated rules pertaining to a few important topics. The first was on protecting a position in the market by using stop orders. The second category was "buying points," the terminology Gann used to describe signals to buy into the market, or go long. The third category was "selling points," describing how to sell into the market, or go short. My father said the Commodities book not only explored these key topics, but also presented many examples to reinforce the stated rules, making it easier to directly apply the concepts to any market.

In *How to Make Profits Trading in Commodities*, the following always jumped out to me in the Foreword, written by Gann himself: "I do not believe in gambling or reckless speculation, but am firmly convinced, after years of experience, that if traders will follow rules and trade on definite indications, that speculation can be made a profitable profession." Right there we have the keys—follow the rules and trade on definite indications. But what comprises that? The chapters ahead explore those rules and tenets.

Gann also wrote, "Trading in commodities is not a gambling business, as some people think, but a practical, safe business when conducted on business principles." You may be wondering, just what are Gann's "business principles"? You will discover these in the pages ahead.

#### **Focus of This Book**

From all the original materials studied by many Gann experts, Gann's work can fall into one of two categories. The first is trading methodologies. How did Gann actually trade the market? He developed a system of rules that he applied in a consistent and disciplined manner. *That* is information that I explore in this book so that you can directly apply it to your charts.

The second category of Gann's work is forecasting methodologies. Gann employed a multitude of forecasting methods, such as measuring angles on his handwritten charts and using natural squares. These were among the prime tools he used to make predictions about future market action. Forecasting tools cover *when* to invest. But trading methodologies cover *how* to invest, returning to the title of this book.

The chapters ahead contain many of Gann's trading principles and methods, interpreted through both diagrams I've created and chart examples. Toward the end of the book, I show you how Gann combined these tools, and I guide you in learning more directly from

his written works. I believe that the greatest value in what I've provided lies in the individual examples. They all apply directly to any market you choose to trade, and I encourage you to follow along with the details of each example as it is presented.

#### **Trading Rules**

Some of the other books that analyze Gann's works, and many of the websites and blogs that touch upon the subject, explore an important list of trading rules that Gann wrote back in 1949. 45 Years on Wall Street lists 24 "never-failing" trading rules based upon Gann's personal experience (see p. 16 and 17 there). However, eight years earlier, Gann had published a list of 28 "valuable" rules in How to Make Profits Trading in Commodities (see p. 43 there). From the list of 28 rules to the list of 24 rules, Gann altered only a few rules, due to the focus of the subject matter (stocks versus commodities).

Appendix A of this book contains Gann's original 28 rules, incorporating the stock-related edits. As you can see, many of Gann's rules use negative words, such as *never* and *don't*, to get his points across. The last of the 28 rules even states, "Avoid getting in wrong and out wrong; getting in right and out wrong; this is making double mistakes." This rule really resonated with me when I first read it. It made me realize that if I could break down the elements of my thoughts and actions (essentially, these rules), I would be more likely to do the one thing Gann wanted his students to do but that he didn't say outright: Get in (the market) right, and get out right.

To focus on correct action, I decided to go through Gann's rules and rephrase any that were written with negative language. Why? Because I believe that telling students what they *should* or *can* do is a more effective teaching method than telling them what they *shouldn't* or *can't* do.

Therefore, Appendix B includes a second list of Gann's rules, but in their "affirmative" form. I refer to the "affirmative" rules throughout this book where applicable.

To begin...

**Gann Rule (Affirmative) #26:** Only follow another man's advice if you know that he knows more than you do.

I'm sharing this rule first to encourage you to explore the rest of this book proactively. I have come to see how Gann's trading methodologies work time and time again, but don't take my word for it. Examine the examples and even observe your own markets of interest to see the knowledge at work.



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