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In Cleveland County's Early Days

By MAMIE JONES

The first paper manufacturing plant erected in the USA was at Germantown, Pa., in 1690, when this section was a wilderness.

About 100 years ago, in 1851, Samuel R. Oates erected a paper mill on the bank of Buffalo creek, five miles east of Shelby, not far from the point where the present State highway crosses that street.

Sam Oates knew that nearly twenty years earlier (in 1832, before Cleveland was erected out of part of Lincoln county) that George Nosteller had built a paper manufacturing plant near Lincolnton, and it appeared to be prospering.

Therefore, he figured he was justified in borrowing money, and he did borrow money from D. Froneberger & Co., and mortgaged to the Fronebergers just about everything he had, including his land, his crop, his set of tinner's tools, and fifty patent coffee pots he had made, in return for money to build and equip this paper mill.

BUFFALO PAPER MILL

The machinery for this mill had to be shipped from a northern manufactory to Winnsboro, S.C., which (in 1851) was the nearest shipping point for long distance freight to Shelby. It was hauled from Winnsboro over muddy, dirt roads to the mill.

From the records, it appears that sometime prior to the summer of 1854, D. Froneberger & Co. took over this plant from Oates, with the agreement that the Fronebergers should operate it, and that Oates should retain an interest as a silent partner.

In copies of old newspapers from 1854 to 1856, we find advertisements by Fronebergers for rags, rags, rags, five hundred thousand pounds of them—tow, cotton, linen—for which the mill would pay three and one-half cents a pound.

Paper made at this mill was of excellent quality, since much of the rags from which it was made were fragments of home-woven linen.

Those pioneers in the early 1800's grew a considerable amount of flax, and wove it into linen, and by the 1850's this linen would have begun to wear out, and he sold for rags.

I quote from Sherrill's "Annals of Lincoln County", published in 1937:

"In 1832, a paper mill was established on the site of Long Shoal cotton mill, four miles south of Lincolnton on South Fork river, by George Mosteller . . . About 1857, it was taken over by Samuel Oates who managed it until 1867, when James Barrister and a Mr. Grady took charge . . .

"In 1868, A. C. Wiswall of Massachusetts, . . . formed a partnership with William Tidley until 1878 when William and Richard Tidley the paper mill located on the site took this mill over, together with of the present Lincolnton cotton mill a mile below Laboratory. They also took over a third mill on Buffalo creek in Cleveland county, (which Oates had built) and carried on the business until 1883, when it was abandoned.

"The paper was manufactured for three to four cents a pound from old rags which the merchants over a wide section bought in barter and sold to the manufacturers."

During the War Between the States in the 1860's the products of these three paper mills were essential, and the men who worked at the mills were exempt from military duty.

HIGH GRADE PAPER

I quote from a Weekly Charlotte Observer, dated Nov. 23, 1878:

"Among the goods exhibited at

the Carolina Fair last week was a lot of writing, printing and wrapping paper, and Bristol board manufactured by Messrs. W. and R. Tidley, near Lincolnton . . . These gentlemen own three mills, two of which are situated in Lincoln county and one in Cleveland, about 16 miles apart, but all three substantially under the same making two tons of paper per day, which for a single year amounts to a million and a quarter pounds which, say valued at ten cents, makes the enormous sum of \$125,000. (In the early days of the Tidley management the paper sold for just a penny a pound.)

"Very nearly all the material (rags) used in manufacturing this paper is gathered up in the surrounding counties of western North Carolina and upper South Carolina, and if not so gathered would be wasted and lost. . . . They employ more than 100 hands. . . . The product of these mills is sent to the four corners of the globe. The Observer, almost from its infancy, has been printed on paper made from these mills."

In 1873, William Tidley solicited an order of paper from Harper Bros. publishers, and Harpers gave a "trial order" which required three months to fill.

It is my understanding that many of the early record books used in Cleveland county were manufactured at these mills. I have before me several copies of the Charlotte Observer of 1878, printed on paper manufactured at these mills, and the paper is still in excellent condition. I have also a copy of the Carolina Intelligencer, published in Shelby in 1854, which, I think, was printed on paper made at these mills, which is in perfect condition.

LIFE

(From Page 1, Second Section)

The Tiddys operated the two Lincoln county mills until 1890, but the Buffalo mill under the management of John F. Tiddy, assisted by his brother James Tiddy, discontinued operations in 1883, all due to competition of wood-pulp paper from Northern manufacturers.

After its abandonment as a paper manufacturing plant, the old building was sold to Eldridge Stubbs, who used it for a grist mill, and later as a machine shop. It stood for many years as a landmark, but was torn down some years ago.

TIDDYS WERE SHIPWRECKED

William Tiddy and sons who operated these mills were Englishmen with a rather interesting background. In 1894, William Tiddy and his family left England on a ship bound for Australia. On high seas they were shipwrecked and lost practically everything they had. They were picked up by an American vessel and carried to Philadelphia.

William Tiddy, with a wife and six children, did not know which way to turn. Being a devout Presbyterian, he went to a Presbyterian minister in the city of Philadelphia, told him of his

plight, and stated that he wanted to go where he could sell his services as a worker in marble and a bridge builder.

This Presbyterian minister told William Tiddy that he had been hearing a great deal a little town called Charlotte, in the state of North Carolina, (probably because of its predominating Scotch-Irish Presbyterian population which had deified King George of England 75 years earlier) and suggested that the Tiddys go there. This was Christmas 1849, and early in 1850 the Tiddys took passage on a boat to Charleston, S. C., and from there they came by wagon to Charlotte, where William Tiddy engaged in business:

William Tiddy and his two sons, James and John F. all took part in the War Between the States, the two sons each rose to the rank of Captain. Another son, Richard Tiddy was known as a Shakesperian scholar, for whom the book club in Charlotte was named.

After closing the Buffalo paper mill in 1883, Capt. James Tiddy and Capt. John F. Tiddy each moved with their families to Shelby. James engaged in his occupation as a stone mason, and John F. moved his family to what later became the "important persons" area of South Washington Street, and engaged in clerical work. He served several terms as member of the School Board, and was for years clerk to the city Board of Aldermen.

DAVID FRONEBERGER

In addition to operating the paper mill, David Froneberger also operated Washington Iron Works on Buffalo creek, and was quite a rich man nearly 100 years ago. His second wife was Miss Alice Hoey, aunt of Hon. C. R. Hoey and Mrs. John Shannonhouse. In the 1850's he built the lovely brick house with white columns on the corner of W. Graham and S. LaFayette street. Maj. Greene later lived in this house, and it is now part of Black's filling station.

Mr. Froneberger also contributed to the erection of the Episcopal church, which was then then right across the street from his house, where Gamble's filling station now stands.

Mrs. Shannonhouse tells me that after disposing of some of his manufacturing interests David Froneberger became interested in raising Irish potatoes. He planted his own land and rented land to grow Irish potatoes. But like many

of the potato growers of today, he had no market for them, and when the crop matured they rotted and he lost considerable money. Later, he and his family moved to Knoxville, Tenn.

THE BUFFALO COTTON MILL

In 1893, when there were less than half-a-dozen cotton mills in the county, T. D. Lattimore (who was then Clerk of the Superior court of the county) and a group of associates, mostly farmers, built a yarn mill on Buffalo creek, where there was abundant water power to operate it.

Dr. E. B. Lattimore tells me that among the men interested in this enterprize with his father, T. D. Lattimore, were: O. C. Dixon, John J. Hunt, A. H. Cline, A. H. Cline, Jr. (these Cline gentlemen were usually known as big Ambrose and little Ambrose, and were distantly related), J. A. Carpenter, A. H. Cronwell, Joe Mull, R. W. Elliott, M. C. Beam, and others.

The total amount of capital paid in was \$35,000. Of this amount \$12,000 was paid in labor. That is, in work done in erecting the buildings and preparing the grounds. There was never sufficient working capital for profitable operation.

In 1910, the mill was bankrupt, and was sold at public auction. Ambrose Cline and C. C. Blanton bought it for \$20,000. In 1912, Eb Mauney became superintendent of a salary of \$100 a month, and during the years of World War I the mill made money under his management.

During the past thirty years the mill has passed through many hands. Last year the Dover Brothers bought it and are now enlarging it. The outlook is that the mill that was for so many years a failure, may now make money and provide employment for many persons.

Man Completes 50 Years Of A

LYNCHBURG

Snead Sharp, a prominent Baptist church member, spent a century of his life in the city of Lynchburg. He was born in the city and spent his entire life here. He was a member of the church for many years and was a prominent member of the community. He was a man of many talents and was a successful businessman. He was a member of the city council and was a prominent member of the community. He was a man of many talents and was a successful businessman. He was a member of the city council and was a prominent member of the community.

Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin in a remote area of Kentucky. He was a man of many talents and was a successful businessman. He was a member of the city council and was a prominent member of the community.

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