American Paper Mills, 1690–1832

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CHAPTER 11

New Hampshire

Rockingham County

Exeter


Formerly employed in the paper trade in Milton, Massachusetts, Richard Jordan received in November 1777 a two-year, interest-free loan of £200 from the New Hampshire House of Representatives as “an Encouragement to carry on the paper Manufacture in Exeter.” The mill appears to have been in operation by April 1778, when local printers began to advertise for rags on his behalf, or by November 1778, when he petitioned the lower house for assistance in his rag-collecting efforts. The legislators directed the town officials to organize efforts to save and store rags for Jordan, who would duly pay for them. References: Hunter 1952, 77–78; Leonard 1950, 491; Exeter Journal, 21 Apr. 1778, 4. Note: Gravell and Miller attribute to this mill an RJ watermark found in a Philadelphia manuscript dated 1818, not a very likely destination for New Hampshire paper. Richard Jordan died in 1802, long after he had left this establishment. At the time of his death he was residing in Andover, Massachusetts, and owned a share in a mill at Dedham (Mass. Mill 9). Reference: Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 817.

The mill was in need of “thorough repair” in 1787, when it was purchased by Eliphalet Hale, who turned it over to William Hale in 1795. References: Hunter 1950, 255; Boston Gazette, 6 Oct. 1788, 3.

William Hale sold the mill in 1806 to Stephen Lampson (also Lamson), who was associated in this business with Gideon Lamson. References: Hunter 1950, 255; Hunter 1952, 157.

In 1810 Stephen Lampson put the mill up for sale along with a house, a barn, and an apple orchard. Three years later he succeeded in selling it to Enoch Wiswall and John Hunting. Wiswall had been involved in Mass. Mill 23 but then quit the papermaking trade to become the agent of a cotton factory in Watertown, Massachusetts. Hunting would go on to work at Mass. Mill 25. References: Hunter 1950, 255; [Exeter, N.H.] Constitutionalist, 12 Nov. 1810, 1; Census of 1820, reel 2, item 51.

Thomas Wiswall purchased the mill in 1815 and formed a partnership with Isaac Flagg. Wiswall & Flagg reported to the Census of 1820 that they were running two engines and two of the three vats in the mill with a workforce of seven men, three women, and six children manufacturing various types of paper worth $8,000 a year. They claimed that business was improving. If so, they might have had the means to buy a cylinder machine by 1832, when they employed only
four men and four women in the manufacture of print-ings, wrappings, and sheathing papers worth about $10,000 a year. The mill burned down in 1833 with a loss estimated at more than $12,000, of which only $4,000 was covered by insurance. References: Hunter 1950, 255; Census of 1820, reel 1, item 2; McLane Report, 1:590–91; Munsell 1876, 97.

After Thomas Wiswall died in 1836, Isaac Flagg carried on the business in association with his sons. In 1849 the firm of Flagg & Brothers employed twelve men and three women in the manufacture of coarse and fine grades worth $20,000 a year. References: Hunter 1950, 255; Pratt 1849, 88, 108.

Addenda

2.–5. The Census of 1810 calls for three paper mills in Rockingham County, and a state gazetteer calls for five in 1817. The Census of 1820 states that the total value of paper manufactured per year in Rockingham amounted to $25,000, which would represent the output of at least three mills the size of the Wiswall & Flagg establishment. The McLane Report contains aggregate production figures indicating that at least one other firm besides Wiswall & Flagg was making paper in this county in 1832, although that firm was so small that it was not named. Apparently it employed two men and two women in the manufacture of goods worth $5,000 a year. References: Coxe 1814, tables, p. 14; Merrill 1817, 189; Census of 1820, reel 1, item 14; McLane Report, 1:589.

Cheshire County

Alstead


Elisha Kingsbery (also Kingsbury) and Ephraim Kingsbery built a linseed oil mill and a paper mill here on 110

Elisha Kingsbery sold quarter shares in his manufacturing ventures to Bill Blake, David Buckman, and Isaac Randall in 1800. Randall offered to sell a one-third interest in the mill in 1803; Blake paid $1,000 for a half interest in 1806 according to Hunter, although he may have left the Alstead mill as early as 1804 to manage the mill he and Kingsbery founded in Bellows Falls, Vermont. References: McCorison 1984, 21; [Walpole, N.H.] Farmer’s Museum, or Literary Gazette, 15 Nov. 1803, 1; Hunter 1952, 79.

Webster Cole & Co. [Webster Cole and Philip Brown] announced in 1805 that they had put the mill “into operation” (as if it had been abandoned by the previous occupants) and that they were now prepared to buy rags and hire journeymen. The mill burned down in 1806, inflicting a loss of $3,300 on Cole and Brown, who had each paid $1,000 to purchase the establishment and had invested additional sums in repairs and supplies. They or their successors must have rebuilt the mill, which was making goods worth $5,200 a year according to the Census of 1810. References: [Walpole, N.H.] Farmer’s Museum, 13 Apr. 1805, 3; [Amherst, N.H.] Farmers’ Cabinet, 17 June 1806, 2; Coxe 1814, tables, p. 14.

In 1813 the mill belonged to “Gen. Burbank,” most likely Major General Caleb Burbank, proprietor of Mass. Mill 35. He had been renting it to Isaac Burbank, who seems to have closed down the papermaking business to pursue other interests on an adjoining plot of land. The mill was still in good repair, although the moulds and felts were so worn as to be worth only $50. Burbank sold the mill to Isaiah Thomas, apparently in partnership with Anson Whipple, the manager of his bookstore in Walpole, New Hampshire. References: Shipton 1948, 68; Anson Whipple to Isaiah Thomas, 1 Jan. 1813 and 11 Feb. 1813, MWA.

Isaiah Thomas sold the mill in 1818 to the printers Newton & Tufts (Newton & Walter Tufts), who promised to pay the interest on a bond they had given him with deliveries of printing paper. In 1820 they employed three men, two women, and four children in the manufacture of no. 1 cap, pot, royal, medium, and demy papers, their annual output valued at $4,500. The mill contained one engine and, no doubt, a single vat. References: Shipton 1948, 71; Census of 1820, reel 1, item 46.

Fig. 11.3. One Ream Vellum Cap N. & 1. Cheshire County Paper Manufactory. Manufactured by Walter Tufts, Alstead, N. H. Engraved ream wrapper. Tufts continued to order copies of this ream wrapper despite the poor condition of the engraved plate. The Huntington Library has a better impression of the oval vignette but only that portion of the ream wrapper. Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society.
In 1832 seven men and twelve women worked at the Alstead mill, which produced goods worth $13,000 a year, half sold in Boston and half in New Hampshire and Vermont. One of the proprietors or managers may have been Edmund Blake of Alstead, who patented a technique for paper sizing in 1833. References: McLane Report, 1:778–79; Burke 1847, 86.

Capitalized at $6,000, the mill employed six men and three women in 1849, when it belonged to Blake & Chandler. Reference: Pratt 1849, 88, 108.

Hillsborough County

Peterborough

7. At the confluence of the Goose River and the Contoocook River.

Jeremiah Smith and Samuel H. Smith were operating a one-vat mill at this location as early as 1794. The Census of 1810 stated that their annual output was worth $12,000, a figure difficult to believe even if they were making mostly writings and printings. In 1820 they employed four men, four girls, and a boy in the manufacture of about 1,500 reams a year. Perhaps on the basis of the previous year’s ledgers, they estimated that they had made 1,006 reams of writings, 274 reams of wrappings, 251 reams of medium printings, and other miscellaneous products with a total wholesale value of $4,146.75. References: Sellers Moulds Finished, 10 or 18 Apr. 1794: double cap and demy, watermarked ER & Co.; Sellers Moulds Finished, 25 Nov. 1797: super royal; Coxe 1814, tables, p. 14; Merrill 1817, 178–79; Census of 1820, reel 1, item 36.

The citizens of Peterborough blamed an outbreak of smallpox in 1829 on infected rags that had been handled by one of the girls in the paper mill. She communicated the disease to members of her family and to some of her friends who were employed in a neighboring cotton factory. Reference: [Salem, Mass.] Salem Gazette, 13 Mar. 1829, 2.

Drawing on data collected in 1832, the McLane Report does not identify the proprietors of the Peterborough mill, which, however, does not seem to have changed very much since 1820: four men and six women worked in this establishment, making products worth $4,000 a year. Reference: McLane Report, 1:869.

Hancock


The firm Butler, Dodge, Baldwin & Co. established this mill in 1828 at a cost of $6,500. Included in this sum was the price of the real estate and “fixtures.” They also invested $500 in machinery and paid an additional $700 in 1830. Reference: McLane Report, 1:846–47.

Louis A. Fletcher purchased the mill in 1832 for $3,300. At that time it was a one-vat mill with a workforce of four men and six women producing goods worth $4,682.50 a year, a figure probably based on the previous year’s accounts. Reference: McLane Report, 1:846–47.

Merrimack County

Pembroke

9. Near the junction of the Merrimack and Suncook Rivers. Formerly part of Rockingham County.

A paper mill was operating in Pembroke as early as 1808, perhaps the “old mill” belonging to John Lewis, who was using it for the manufacture of paper from junk between 1811 and 1814. He was making mostly wrappings in this establishment, which burned down in May 1816. A newspaper report of the fire states that the mill belonged to Lieutenant John Lewis and Captain Edward Fuller and that the losses amounted to $2,300 or $2,500, not counting the value of the stock. Another newspaper pegged the losses at $36,000, a scarcely credible figure given the remote location of Pembroke and the modest extent of Lewis’s other
business ventures. Lewis was also associated with one Pratt, probably Leonard Pratt, around 1813, when in a local newspaper they denounced the underhanded tactics of a Haverhill, Massachusetts, printer who had forcibly seized several reams of their wrappings on the pretext that they had violated a recently enacted law concerning the labeling of paper. References: McLane Report, 1:730–31; Lewis Papers; Newburyport Herald, 17 May 1816, 3; [Wilmington, Del.] American Watchman, 29 May 1816, 3; [Concord, N.H.] New Hampshire Patriot, 31 Aug. 1813, 4.

Lewis began to rebuild the mill (or build a new one nearby) in August 1816 and a month later completed work on an edifice measuring 60 feet, 8 inches long and 31 feet, 4 inches wide. He started making wrappings there that November. Reference: Lewis Papers.

10. Industry Mill. Near the junction of the Merrimack and Suncook Rivers. Formerly part of Rockingham County.

As of October 1811 John Lewis assigned some of his employees to work in the “New Mill,” where they were making wrappings and writings in early 1814. It is difficult to determine the relationship between his two mills because his ledgers also refer to the building he erected in August 1816 as the “New Mill” and to yet another “New Papermill” completed in 1818, which he called the Industry. Construction was still under way in May 1817, when a wooden shaft broke out of its chains, fell down, and killed one workman and badly injured another. By July 1820 the Industry Mill was making mostly wrapping grades, and the “Old Mill” was making writing grades. Lewis owned two one-vat mills in 1823. I lose sight of him after 1829, when he made his last entries in the ledgers at MWA, but paper was still being made in Pembroke in 1832. Moses Grant II was Lewis’s agent in Boston in 1820, when Lewis put a single-vat mill up for sale, noting that boats passed by on their way to Boston almost every day of the year. References: Lewis Papers; Merrill 1817, 177–78; Kayser 1823, 123; [Amherst, N.H.] Farmers’ Cabinet, 7 May 1817, 3; Boston Gazette, 22 May 1820, 4.

11. On Suncook Falls.

Leonard Pratt owned a one-vat paper mill at this location in 1823, and the mill was still in operation in 1832. References: Kayser 1823, 123; McLane Report, 1:730–31.


12. On Suncook Falls.

C. K. Williams owned a one-vat paper mill at this location in 1823, and the mill was still in operation in 1832. Without naming names, the McLane Report states that Pembroke was the site of four paper mills staffed by twelve men, four women, and four boys. Given the size of the workforce, these must have been one-vat mills. References: Kayser 1823, 123; McLane Report, 1:730–31.

Warner

13. Waterloo.

Daniel Bean, Henry Chase, and John Kimball built this mill in 1816 or 1817. References: Harriman 1879, 529; Hunter 1950, 255; McLane Report, 1:758–59.

The Boston stationer William Parker bought out the original partners and then either sold or rented the mill to Gibbs & Greenleaf. Reference: Harriman 1879, 529.

John Foley took over the establishment sometime before 1832, when an account of his operations was prepared for the McLane Report. At that time, he employed four men, three women, and a boy in the manufacture of paper worth $6,500 a year, including sales of wrappings valued at $4,000, printings at $2,000, and writings at $500. A third of his sales were in New Hampshire, the rest in Massachusetts. He may have started as early as 1828 if I am correct in attributing
the design of the wood engraving in his ream wrapper to William Hoogland, who left Boston in that year to work in New York, too far away to have done business with Foley. If this was a stock cut, however, the ream wrapper could have been printed after that date. References: Hunter 1950, 255; McLane Report, 1:758–59; Groce & Wallace 1957, 324–25.

Northfield

Established in 1821, this mill belonged to R. T. & I. Crane (also R. Y. & J. Crane) in 1832, when its workforce consisted of four men, eight women, and a boy making 3,300 reams a year worth $6,225. A third of the sales were in New Hampshire, the rest in Massachusetts. The firm was operating as R. P. Crane & Co. in 1834, when it was buying equipment or machinery from Phelps & Spafford. References: Kayser 1823, 123; McLane Report, 1:698, 750–51; Phelps & Spafford Ledger, 1829–1834.
Franklin

15. Franklin Falls, on the Winnipiseogue River.

Kendall O. Peabody and James L. Peabody built a mill here in 1827, probably a two-vat establishment because it consumed around 45 tons of rags a year. They employed six men and ten women in the manufacture of 7,500 reams a year, valued at $9,000. At one point they had on hand pot, foolscap, demy, blue demy, and wrapping paper amounting to 1,825 reams, which they would sell for “rags, cash or good notes,” although they warned that they could no longer afford to give credit on generous terms. Half of their sales were in Massachusetts, a quarter in New York, and a quarter in New Hampshire. References: http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nhcfrank/biodaniellw.htm (accessed 18 Feb. 2011); McLane Report, 1:752–53.

The Peabodys’ “agent” was Jeremiah F. Daniels, who appears to have learned the papermaking trade in Mass. Mill 30 in Pepperell. In addition to his salary of $365 a year, he owned an interest in the firm and eventually purchased the share of James L. Peabody. In 1849 the firm of Peabody & Daniels employed thirteen men and six women in the manufacture of mostly printing grades worth $35,000 a year. By that time the firm had acquired a Fourdrinier machine from Phelps & Spafford. References: http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nhcfrank/biodaniellw.htm (accessed 18 Feb. 2011); [Concord, N.H.] New-Hampshire Patriot, 10 Aug. 1829, 3; McLane Report, 1:758–59; Pratt 1849, 88, 108.

Grafton County

Ashland

17. On the Pemigewasset River, formerly Holderness or New-Holderness.

A one-vat, one-engine mill was operating in New-Holderness in 1810, when its annual output was appraised at $5,250. Reference: Coxe 1814, tables, p. 14.

A paper mill in Holderness belonged to A. & J. Lovejoy, who also owned a distillery in Sanbornton, New Hampshire, a share in a saw mill in Maine, and other properties in New Hampshire and Vermont. They were renting out the paper mill for $400 a year in 1816, when their trustees announced that their partnership had been dissolved and put their real estate holdings up for sale. Reference: Boston Daily Advertiser, 28 June 1816, 1.

By 1820 the mill belonged to Simon L. Gordon, who, however, had discontinued manufacturing operations because of declining sales. “Unless there is restriction as to the importation of foreign Paper,” Gordon noted on his census form, “this Establishment must go down.” After that ominous remark, nothing more is heard of him. In better times he employed four men, two women, and a child in the manufacture of various types of paper worth $4,500 a year. References: Merrill 1817, 168–69; Census of 1820, reel 1, item 82.
Sullivan County

Claremont

18. On the Sugar River, the south side of the third fall. Claremont was part of Cheshire County until Sullivan County was formed in 1842.

Founded around 1810, a paper mill in Claremont belonging to Josiah Stevens burned down in 1814. References: [Burlington, Vt.] *Northern Sentinel*, 16 Dec. 1814, 2; Ide 1879, 6.

In 1817 a New Hampshire gazetteer noted that two paper mills were operating in Cheshire County, one in Alstead (N.H. Mill 6) and the other in Claremont. Reference: Merrill 1817, 100.

Josiah Stevens & Son were operating the mill in 1823. Reference: Kayser 1823, 123.

Stevens & Blake occupied the mill in 1825, when it caught fire and suffered damages estimated at about $600. MWA has a ream wrapper issued by their successors, Blake & Fiske, who were still in business around 1833. References: [Concord, N.H.] *New-Hampshire Patriot*, 8 Aug. 1825, 2; Ide 1879, 3–4.

19. Claremont Manufacturing Company. On the Sugar River, the south side of the fourth fall.

Chartered in 1832, the Claremont Manufacturing Company was established for the manufacture of paper and satinette by a syndicate of local investors. They were authorized to raise capital of $100,000 and sold stock priced at $200 a share, but began to do business with a bare minimum of start-up funds, less than a tenth of what the charter allowed. They built a stone factory on 15 acres of land containing “four of the most valuable water falls in the village.” The printer Simeon Ide joined the firm in 1834 and replaced the textile machinery with his printing equipment, valued at $20,000. Some of the mill sites had to be sold off during the Panic of 1837, but the company remained in the paper business and expanded its printing and publishing operations. In 1849 it was capitalized at $120,000 and had a workforce of eighteen men and twenty-two women engaged in paper manufacture and book production, their annual output valued at $40,000. Simeon Ide served as agent until 1858, and his successors were still making book paper and newsprint as late as 1879. References: Ide 1879, 11–14; http://www.crjc.org/heritage/N07-26.htm (accessed 3 April 2011); Pratt 1849, 88, 108; *The Boston Almanac and Business Directory*. 1880, vol. 45 (Boston: Sampson, Davenport & Co., [1879]), 465.
Belknap County

Gilford

20. Meredith Bridge or Gilford, adjacent localities in a district formerly part of Strafford County.

The Merrill 1817 gazetteer does not mention a paper mill in this area, but one was in operation by 1819, when a fire damaged it as well as other manufacturing facilities in Meredith Bridge, a village between Gilford and Meredith. Reference: *New-York Columbian*, 31 Dec. 1819, 2.

Aaron Martin (also Mardin) was running a paper mill in Gilford in 1820, when the census authorities wrote up an account of his establishment. They describe it as a three-vat mill, although it was capitalized at only $1,000 and consumed only 15 tons of rags a year, an amount one would expect in a less active one-vat mill. Martin employed five men, two women, two boys, and two girls in the manufacture of writings and wrappings worth $3,500 a year, figures also indicating that he was operating on a modest scale. Reference: Census of 1820, reel 1, item 20.

Martin was still operating the mill in 1834, when it burned down in a blaze caused by a stove placed too close to paper hanging in the loft. At that time the mill belonged to a local bank, Martin perhaps having defaulted on his debts but having persuaded his creditors to let him stay in business. The bank’s losses were estimated at $3,000, of which the amount of $2,000 was covered by insurance. Reference: [Amherst, N.H.] *Farmers’ Cabinet*, 19 Dec. 1834, 3.