American Paper Mills, 1690–1832

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Published by Dartmouth College Press


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CHAPTER 13

Delaware

New Castle County

Wilmington


The Philadelphia Quaker merchants Joshua Fisher and Thomas Gilpin owned land on Brandywine Creek, where they built a grist and snuff mill around 1765. Gilpin married Fisher’s daughter Lydia and joined with his brothers-in-law Thomas Fisher, Samuel Rowland Fisher, and Miers Fisher in several highly profitable trading ventures and in the management of extensive landholdings in Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. The firm Gilpin & Fisher dealt in flour and purchased wheat for mills in Maryland and Delaware. In the years preceding the Revolution they invested large sums in overseas trade, importing English manufactures on the one hand and exporting American provisions on the other, while also discounting notes and lending money on the side. They openly deplored the conflict with the mother country, where they had strong social connections, commercial interests, and political sympathies. Although more moderate in his views than the Fisher brothers, Gilpin was arrested along with them and other prominent Quaker loyalists and was sent into exile in Virginia, where he died in 1778. When trade resumed after the war, the Fisher brothers managed the business affairs of their sister Lydia Gilpin and her two sons Joshua Gilpin and Thomas Gilpin, who joined with their uncles in commercial ventures overseas but were also involved in domestic manufactures. Miers Fisher took a leading role in establishing the Brandywine Paper Mill, regarding it more as a community service than as a financial investment and as a suitable occupation for his nephew Joshua, who was just starting out on his business career. The French political scientist Brissot de Warville visited the mill and obtained an account of its initial operations from Miers Fisher, who told him, “Our Expectations however are very moderate & as we did not enter into it much with a View to Profit as to employ a patrimonial Estate in a way that might be useful to the Community I hope we shall not be disappointed.” Joshua Gilpin transacted the affairs of the mill under the name of Joshua Gilpin & Company, although the business belonged to his mother and his uncles Miers and Thomas Fisher. They hired an Irish papermaker, James Given, to supervise the construction of the manufacturing facilities and to serve as foreman. Construction was completed by May 1787, when the proprietors began advertising for rags in local newspapers and in a broadside, Delaware Paper Manufactory (Wilmington: Printed by Jacob A. Killen, [1787]; DeU). Rags
could be delivered to Joshua Gilpin’s warehouse in Philadelphia, a store in Wilmington, or directly to the foreman at the mill. Joshua Gilpin & Company would have also bought large quantities of imported rags, needing higher quality stock to produce fine papers that could compete with foreign products at the upper end of the market. These aspirations Miers Fisher confided at an early date to Brissot de Warville, who reported that his informant “produces beautiful writing and printing paper equal to the finest made in France.” More watermarks can be attributed to the Brandywine Paper Mill than to any other American manufactory because its proprietors concentrated on writings and top-quality printings and advertised them so adroitly that their products are comparatively easy to locate and identify. References: Sellers Moulds Finished, 1 Nov. 1788: writing demy; Sellers Moulds Finished, 17 May 1794: post, watermarked JG & Co. BRANDYWINE and posthorn; Sellers Moulds Ordered, 24 Dec. 1798 = Sellers Moulds Finished, 21 Mar. 1799: double cap, watermarked JG & Co. 1799 and plow; Bidwell 1992, 17–42; Hancock & Wilkinson 1958.

JG & Co | BRANDYWINE = fleur-de-lis [laid] — ms., Wilmington, Del., 1784 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 524–25); Articles of the Hibernia Fire-Company in Philadelphia ([Philadelphia: s.n., ca. 1787]; PHi broadside); The Federalist: A Collection of Essays, Written in Favour of the New Constitution (New York: Printed and Sold by J. and A. M’Lean, 1788; NN, Harlan Crow Library, Dallas, Tex.); H. Clarke, Quaedam ex colloquiis Corderii (Philadelphia: Printed by Benjamin Franklin Bache, 1789; PPL); David Humphreys, The Miscellaneous Works (New York: Printed by Hodge, Allen and Campbell, 1790; BL, John Bidwell).


JG & Co | BRANDYWINE = posthorn in shield [laid, turned chain lines] — ms., Wilmington, Del., 1798 (Thomas Gilpin corresp., 1798, 1812, Fisher Family Papers, PHi); ms., Philadelphia, Pa., 1798, and Wilmington, Del., 1818 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 532–33);
ms., Philadelphia, Pa., 1800 (Miers Fisher to William Cobbett, General Correspondence, Fisher Family Papers, PHi); ms., Wilmington, Del., 1801 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 522; countermark only?); ms., Wilmington, Del., 1817 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 523; deteriorated, countermark only?).

JG & C* [laid] — ms., Newport, R.I., 1800 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 513; countermark only?).


Note: The dates cited by Gravell & Miller for wmk 515 and 524–25 are either mistranscribed or misinterpreted because the mill was not founded until 1787.

In 1795 Joshua Gilpin took a leave of absence from the firm and departed on an extended tour of the British Isles and the Continent. While traveling abroad he took extensive notes on trading conditions and technological innovations such as the bleaching process and the steam engine. In a letter to Miers Fisher he explained what he hoped to learn in the heartland of the Industrial Revolution: “I did not fail however to make myself acquainted with every thing relative to the Paper trade & manufacture which can be learnt in the City together with the analogous business of printing. The improvements in both are wonderfully great. . . . I am the more convinced of the great opening which our country offers for their extention & the more solicitous while here to make myself compleatly master of them.” His travels diaries contain a long account of conversations with the preeminent papermaker of his day, James Whatman Jr., whose high standards and stylistic innovations he had been emulating at the Brandywine Mill. During this trip abroad Gilpin succeeded in recruiting a foreman to replace William Given, who had taken over the management of the mill after his father James Given retired in 1798 but left after only a year on the job. The new foreman, Lawrence Greattrake, was the son of a paper-mill proprietor in Hertfordshire and was a master of the English techniques that Gilpin hoped to introduce in America. Just after Greattrake arrived in 1800, the firm was reorganized as Thomas Gilpin & Company, recognizing that Joshua’s brother Thomas had taken over the management of the mill, although Joshua still participated in other business ventures. Immediately implementing what Greattrake knew and what Joshua had learned of British methods, Thomas modernized the mill and announced to the trade that it was operating under new management in association with “a foreign artist of superior knowledge in the business.” By this time Lydia Gilpin had given or sold her half interest to her sons. Their uncle Miers Fisher held a third interest in the mill, and Thomas Fisher retained his share until 1808 or until his death in 1810, whereupon it must have been divided up somehow between the Gilpin and Fisher sides of the family. The Gilpins were the first American papermakers to experiment with methods of chlorine bleaching on a systematic basis, although the process had already been patented by Cyrus Austin (who merely copied the specifications in an English publication). They built a bleaching house adjacent to the mill in 1804 but soon discovered that this process was not suitable for the fine papers they were producing, not just writings, but also high-quality plate papers, drawings, and security papers. A collection of elaborately watermarked banknote papers made at the Brandywine Mill is at PHi. One of their ream wrappers is reproduced in Hancock 1955 and Wilkinson 1975.


TG & C° = ship in single oval surround [laid] — mss., Dover, Del., 1802, and Philadelphia, Pa., 1806 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 917–18, perhaps with the wrong countermark [see the next entry]).


TG & C° | 1803 = crown shield posthorn | TG & C° [laid] — ms., Philadelphia, Pa., n.d. (Gilpin & Fisher accounts, PHi); ms., Wilmington, Del., or Philadelphia, Pa., 1804 (Dilworth corresp., vol. 56, PHi; watermark only); ms., Philadelphia, Pa., 1804 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 919; countermark only); ms., New York, N.Y., 1811 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 916; watermark only).

T GILPIN & Co | 1803 = crown shield fleur-de-lis [laid] — *Mirror of the Times & General Advertiser*, no. 427 (Wilmington: James Wilson, 4 Jan. 1804; DeHi).

T GILPIN & C° | BRANDYWINE = crown shield posthorn | TG [in script] [laid] — ms., New York, N.Y., 1804 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 915; watermark only); ms., Philadelphia, Pa., 1811 (Joshua Gilpin & family corresp., 1795–1802, PHi; watermark only); ms., Philadelphia, Pa., 1812 (NYHS).

T GILPIN & C° | BRANDYWINE = ship [laid] — ms., Philadelphia, Pa., 1806 (NYHS; watermark only); ms., Wilmington, Del., 1808 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 392–93).


T GILPIN & C° | BRANDYWINE = crown shield fleur-de-lis | TG [in script] [laid] — blank sheets removed from a ledger made ca. 1808–1817 (included with special copies of Bidwell 1990, which contains reproductions of the watermarks on pp. 54–55); ms., Boston, Mass., 1818 (AAS); ms., New Castle, Del., n.d. (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 390–91).

T GILPIN & C° | BRANDYWINE = Britannia [laid] — ms., Wilmington, Del., 1808 (Gilpin Letter Book); ms., Wilmington, Del., 1808 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 394; watermark only, repro. in reverse); ms., Philadelphia, Pa., 1812 (Thomas Gilpin corresp., 1798, 1812, Fisher Family Papers, PHi); blank sheet (AAS).

T GILPIN & C° | 1810 [laid] — blank fragment (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 395; countermark only).

cheaper and easier to build. For the same reasons, Gilpin decided that cylinder technology would be easier to adopt in America and sought to skirt the legal and contractual obstacles by means of industrial espionage, not just on his part but also with the crucial assistance of Lawrence Greatrake, who was taking care of family business in England at that time and knew Dickinson well enough to call on him without raising suspicion. The hospitable inventor allowed Greatrake to inspect the cylinder in action and even to make some sketches if he so desired, although he was not permitted to see the concealed parts of the mechanism. On the basis of Greatrake’s observations and the technical data collected by Joshua Gilpin, Thomas Gilpin built the first American papermaking machine, which he patented in December 1816. Some improvements were required before he could make paper on a regular basis, and he was not able to start selling the products of the cylinder until around March 1818, when the Carey firm purchased machine-made 30-pound copperplate medium for use in Carey’s General Atlas (Philadelphia: Published by M. Carey and Son, 1818; MWA). He sold machine-made newsprint to Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser (PPL) in April 1818. His earliest customers extolled his innovative products in an advertising brochure, Certificates Respecting the Machine Paper Made at the Brandywine Paper Mills (Philadelphia: J. Maxwell, printer, 1818; PPL, PPAmP), which is, however, printed on handmade stock from another mill. Lawrence Greatrake died while the machine was being tested and was succeeded as foreman by his son George Greatrake. References: Bidwell 1992, 174–225, 233, 335–38; Burke 1847, 85; Hancock & Wilkinson 1957; Wilkinson 1963.

The Gilpin brothers greatly expanded their manufacturing facilities to accommodate the cylinder machine. Instead of refitting the mill, they built a second mill nearby with a power train, drying loft, and finishing room specifically designed for mass-production papermaking. The cost of the new building and the repeated attempts to construct a viable cylinder amounted to $60,000, a capital expenditure unprecedented in the American paper trade but made possible...
Fig. 13.2. Gilpin & Co. Brandywine. Fine Quarto Post Hot Pressed. Ream wrapper, engraved by James W. Steel. Courtesy of the Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware.
by the great wealth of the Gilpin and Fisher families. Miers Fisher retired from the firm in 1814 and sold his one-third share to the brothers for a bond of $10,000, essentially lending them the money to buy him out. They also mortgaged large tracts of land they had inherited and raised short-term capital by exchanging accommodation notes with the bookseller and publisher Benjamin Warner, who was a son-in-law of Miers Fisher. Overextended and overly confident of their family’s support, they stretched their credit resources so recklessly that they had to stop payment in November 1818 after losing large sums in a banking disaster in Wilmington and in the failure of a trading house in Philadelphia. Nevertheless, they managed to stay in business by coming to terms with their creditors on the basis of recent Pennsylvania legislation for the relief of defaulting debtors. Their major creditors were Fisher and Warner, whose loans were partially secured by a mortgage on the Brandywine estate. They also depended on credit provided by their major customer, Mathew Carey, who purchased large quantities of machine paper and paid for it in advance with notes they could discount for ready cash. Reference: Bidwell 1992, 226–73.

In 1821 Thomas Gilpin submitted detailed reports on both mills for the Census of Manufactures. He estimated that the machine could make as much paper in a day as six vats and could produce in a year printing grades and other goods with a total wholesale value ranging between $35,000 and $50,000. To tend the machine, he employed eight men, two boys, and ten women in the finishing room and forty children in the rag loft. In the old mill they were making fine papers worth $30,000 to $40,000 per year at two vats, employing ten men, four boys, and ten women in the finishing room and twenty children in the rag loft. A flood in 1822 damaged the paper mills and destroyed a recently erected four-story cotton mill. After this setback the Gilpins needed to find a new source of credit to replace Warner, who died in 1821. Another member of their extended family, Thomas Fisher II, agreed to rent the mill with an option to buy and with the understanding that he would employ Thomas Gilpin as supervisor at $2,000 a year and Joshua Gilpin as a consultant at $1,000 a year. References: Bidwell 1992, 274–83; Census of 1820, reel 17, item 3.

The vat mill burned down in 1825, inflicting losses of about $20,000 and inducing the less indulgent creditors to seize the personal property of the Gilpin brothers. Thomas Fisher joined with four Philadelphia merchants in a plan to develop the industrial potential of the mill property by forming a corporation to be called the Brandywine Manufacturing Company. His partners were John Hemphill, John B. Newman, Jacob B. Clement, and Nathan Bunker, also trading as Newman, Clement & Company after they bought Fisher out around 1833. At that time the Brandywine Manufacturing Company employed twenty men, ten boys, and fifty women to tend the machine and three engines, manufacturing fine writings and drawings worth $60,000 a year. However, the partners were less interested in the paper trade than in the valuable land and water rights they owned in Wilmington, which they hoped to turn into a manufacturing center like the mill towns in New Jersey and Massachusetts. They proposed to build a railroad, sell insurance, and start a bank. Thomas Gilpin wrote out for them petitions to the Delaware state authorities, who granted them a charter in 1836.

authorizing them to employ capital of $1 million but also requiring them to raise a third of that sum (later reduced to $160,000) before they could begin business. The provisions of the charter are recounted in *The Acts of the Legislature of Delaware, Incorporating the Brandywine Manufacturing and Banking Company* (Wilmington: Printed by R. & J. B. Porter, 1836; DLC). Unfortunately, financial anxieties preceding the Panic of 1837 discouraged investors from buying stock in the concern. Dismayed by the failure of their stock offering and by the dismal state of the economy, Newman, Clement & Company closed down the mill in 1837 and abandoned it in 1839, when another flood damaged it beyond repair. Some of the partners had invested so heavily in the Brandywine Manufacturing Company that they became insolvent when it failed. While winding down its affairs, they acknowledged that they owed the estate of Miers Fisher $10,000, a debt assumed by the Gilpin brothers, who never repaid their uncle for the money they borrowed in 1814. Two contemporary views of the Brandywine Paper Mill are in Wilkinson 1975. References: Bidwell 1992, 283–91; McLane Report, 2:817–18.

**Newark**


Thomas Meeteer lived in Chester County, Pennsylvania, before moving to Delaware and buying a tract of land on White Clay Creek. Besides running an extensive farm, he built a large paper mill on his property, perhaps encouraged by the increasing prosperity of the Chester County paper trade to try his luck in this part of the country. It is not known when he began production, but in 1789 he purchased moulds with a watermark that first appears in a document with that date. Instead of competing with the Gilsips in Philadelphia, he did most of his business in Baltimore, where he owned a bookstore that could serve as a retail outlet for writings and a distribution center for printings and other bulk commodities. Around 1796 he was associated with Thomas Elms, who owned a share in the mill, and with Joseph Webb, who left in 1798 to start his own establishment just across the Pennsylvania border at Pa. Mill 82. Previously trading as Thomas Meeteer & Company, he formed the firm of Thomas Meeteer & Sons with his sons Samuel and William Meeteer. References: Hancock 1955, 49–51; Silver 1953, 41; Cooper 1991, 6; Sellers Moulds Finished, 1 Jan. 1789: double foolscap, watermarked TM & Cco; Sellers Moulds Finished, 7 June 1798: double cap, watermarked with twelve letters. TM & Cco [laid] — mss., Duck Creek, Del., 1789, and Philadelphia, Pa., 1791 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 930); ms., Cecil County, Md., 1792 (AAS); Md. General Assembly, House of Delegates, Committee on Alteration of the Constitution, *The Constitution and Form of Government* (Annapolis: Printed by Frederick Green, 1792; PPL); ms., Philadelphia, Pa., 1795 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 931); ms., Philadelphia, Pa. 1795, and Wilmington, Del., 1799 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 932); ms., Baltimore, Md., 1797 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 933); ms., Philadelphia, Pa., 1797 (Carey Papers, 8:2879, 2880).


In 1804 Thomas Meeteer sold his Delaware holdings for £2,650 to Samuel Meeteer, who ran the paper business in partnership with his brother-in-law John Armstrong. After certain unexplained setbacks, Armstrong left in disgrace sometime before November 1805, when Samuel Meeteer tried to sell his woodland, farmland, orchards, saw mill, and paper mill (noting that the latter was designed to contain three vats but was currently running only two). Finding no purchasers, Samuel Meeteer continued to manage the mill and announced that his partnership with Armstrong was dissolved in November 1806. Thomas Meeteer went bankrupt in 1807 but was able to buy back the Dela-
ware property plus an additional 100 acres for $15,000. Armstrong may have been responsible for the financial tribulations of his father-in-law, who left him a vindictive dollar in his will to prevent any further claims on his estate and threatened to disinherit his daughter if she had anything more to do with her scapegrace husband. References: Cooper 1991, 9–10; [Philadelphia, Pa.] Aurora, 15 Nov. 1805, 4; Sellers Moulds Ordered, 22 May 1804: several sizes ordered by John Armstrong and Samuel Meeteer; Sellers Moulds Finished, 3 Apr. 1810: post vellum, watermarked MEETEER, purchased by Samuel Meeteer.

After Thomas Meeteer died in 1812, his sons Samuel and William Meeteer formed a partnership to carry on the mill at Milford and the bookstore and paper warehouse in Baltimore. By 1820 they had all three vats in operation and were employing twenty-one men, twenty-eight women, and seven children in the manufacture of writing and printing grades worth $32,000 a year. They complained that demand for their products had declined since the Embargo of 1807 and that their credit risks had increased. Nonetheless, they were running the mill at full capacity and were in a strong enough position ten years later to purchase a cylinder machine. References: Silver 1953, 41; Hancock 1955, 51–52; “Valuation of Milford & Providence Paper Mills &c.,” 1837, AAS; Census of 1820, reel 17, item 27; Sellers Moulds Ordered, 10 June 1813: post vellum; Sellers Moulds Ordered, 26 Sept. 1824: post vellum, watermarked Meeteer; Sellers Letter Book, 2 Sept. 1830.

MEETEER [laid] — ms., Hagerstown, Md., 1814 (Gravel & Miller 2002, wmk 703); Drs. Thomas Wiguell and Alexander Reinagle, Late Proprietors of the Baltimore Theatre... To Cash Advanced as a Loan... ([Baltimore: s.n., 1815], printed doc.; DLC broadside port. 29:11); ms., Hampshire County [W.Va.?], 1815 (AAS).


Meeteer [wove, in script] — ms., Sussex County, Del., 1822 (Gravel & Miller 2002, wmk 705); ms., Petersburg, Va., 1802 [i.e., 1820?] (AAS).

Upon the retirement of Samuel Meeteer in 1832 his brother carried on the business as William Meeteer & Company, still based in Baltimore but now running one or two additional mills in Maryland (Md. Mills 23 and/or 24). He wrote an account of the Milford manufactory for the McLane Report, where he stated that he employed thirty-four people in the manufacture of goods worth $22,000 a year. He observed that output had increased by more than 25 percent within ten years, while prices had fallen by 20 percent. References: AAD 1832, 17; McLane Report, 2:818.

William Meeteer died in 1833, and Samuel Meeteer died intestate in 1838, survived by his wife and eight children. By that time, two members of the trade had appraised the value of the mill at $12,000. The administrators of Samuel’s estate sold his property to several people in 1841. After some years of neglect, the Milford property was acquired by the Massachusetts papermakers George B. Curtis and Solomon M. Curtis, founders of the Curtis Paper Company, which continued to make paper on the premises until 1997, when its parent company closed the mill. References: “Valuation of Milford & Providence Paper Mills &c.,” 1837, AAS; Cooper 1991, 13; Hancock 1955, 52; Wilkinson 1975, 34; Oyvind Haugen, “The Curtis Paper Mill,” http://www.paperindustryweb.com/pjcurtisupdate091501.htm (accessed 18 Feb. 2011).

3. On White Clay Creek, two miles northwest of Newark.

In 1811 John Glenn and Thomas Glenn purchased 33 acres of land on White Clay Creek, where they converted an existing fulling mill to paper manufacture. Scharf notes that they were papermakers by trade; if so, they were probably journeymen of modest means who were trying to go into business for themselves. The mill had only one vat in 1816, when they put it up for sale along with two log dwelling houses and about

At some point the Glenns sold out to James Falls, who bequeathed the mill to his son John Falls (also Fales). In the McLane Report John Falls claims that the mill was established in 1830, perhaps because he renovated, rebuilt, or inherited his manufacturing facilities in that year. He was still running only one vat and employed four men and a boy to produce about 2,000 reams a year, which he sold in Philadelphia or Baltimore for cash or in exchange for rags. In 1837 he put up for sale his estate of 85 acres, including 20 acres of woodland, an orchard, a farm, and a stone paper mill measuring 24 by 50 feet with one engine and a cylinder machine. References: Scharf 1888, 2:940; McLane Report, 2:717–18; [Wilmington, Del.] Delaware Gazette and American Watchman, 20 Dec. 1836, 3.

Yorklyn

4. On Red Clay Creek, Christiana Hundred, nine miles from Wilmington.

Proprietor of a snuff mill at this location, John Garrett II also owned a grist mill nearby, which he tried to sell in October 1789 and then converted to paper manufacture sometime before 1795. His son John Garrett III managed the paper mill and acquired a half interest in the establishment. References: Weslager 1965, 28–29; Sellers Moulds Finished, 7 Apr. 1795: double wrapping and double cap watermarked JG SON & Co and eagle.

JG SON & Co = American eagle [laid] — ms., n.p., 1794 (AAS); mss., Baltimore, Md., 1795, and Dover, Del., 1818 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmks 540–41); Md. General Assembly, House of Delegates, By the House of Delegates, January 1, 1799. Whereas it is highly expedient that every constitutional barrier should be opposed . . . ([Annapolis: Printed by Frederick Green, 1799]; DLC broadside port. 28:34).

JG SON & Co [laid, turned chain lines] — mss., Peckatone, Va., 1797, and Turbutville, Va., 1806 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 538); ms., Greenburg, Pa., 1797 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 537; deteriorated mould); ms., Peckatone, Va., 1797 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 536; deteriorated mould).


John Garrett III left the mill and moved to Ohio in 1804. His father then deeded half of the mill to his son Levi Garrett and the other half, along with 114 acres of land, to his son Horatio Gates Garrett, who took over the management of the establishment. Horatio may have joined the business as early as 1801, when a watermark appears with his initials in conjunction with his father’s. In any case, his business did not prosper, probably because he faced stiff competition from other local mills. As his losses mounted, he borrowed money from his brother, contracted other loans, and mortgaged the mill property as well as the farm. In 1808 he was working off a debt to Joshua and Thomas Gilpin, who sold to him the coarse rags they could not use and employed him to make printing grades for them to sell in their Philadelphia warehouse. “Wishing to decline business,” he put his farm and the mill up for sale in 1811 and 1812, noting that it had two vats and two engines. Apparently no one was willing to buy it on his terms, and it had to be sold by the sheriff in 1813. Then he too moved to Ohio, where he found a job as a foreman in a paper mill. References: Weslager 1965, 30–38; Hancock 1955, 54; Sellers Moulds Finished, 30 June 1804: super royal, purchased by Levi Garrett; Sellers Moulds Finished, 5 May 1810: double cap, watermarked HGG; Gilpin Letter Book; [Wilmington, Del.] American Watchman, 22 June 1811, 3, and 3 Oct. 1812, 3.


Rockland


William Young emigrated from Scotland to Philadelphia, where he established a bookstore in 1785 and engaged in various printing and publishing ventures in partnership with other members of the trade. He was dealing in paper as early as 1792 and purchased wrapping moulds in 1794, although he may have been acting for one of his suppliers. He is said to have built this mill in 1795 and was certainly making paper by June of that year, when he sold to Mathew Carey 20 reams of foolscap no. 2 with his DELAWARE watermark. At first he rented the property and then purchased it in 1801, perhaps waiting until then to see if the business would turn a profit. A government contract may have encouraged him to make this investment, which would have been amply repaid by sales of official stationery amounting to $3,500 in the course of one three-month period. At about that time he began to sell his products in town at the Delaware Paper Mill Warehouse, which he ran in partnership with William Bonnell from 1803 to 1804. He then sold his bookstore, printing office, and paper warehouse and moved to Rockland. Wholly engaged in manufacturing pursuits, Young experimented with alternative raw materials and presented the Philadelphia Company of Booksellers with samples of paper made from the roots of the mulberry tree mixed with bark of the Guiana tree. His foreman was George Smith, who later managed his London Britain paper mill (Pa. Mill 84) as either a partner or a tenant. After the Rockland mill burned down in 1814, he salvaged what he could of his establishment and converted it to other manufacturing pursuits, such as a woolen mill, which was making kerseys, broadcloths, and merino shawls in 1820. During most of his career he was closely connected with the Philadelphia printer and bookseller William Wallis Woodward, who failed in 1825 and brought Young down as well. Hancock 1955 has a reproduction of a watercolor view of the Delaware Paper Mills, apparently executed in 1835 but depicting the manufactory as it was in 1814. References: Brown 1949, 390, 145 (part XI); Wilkinson 1975, 30–32; Hancock 1955, 44–48; Relfs Philadelphia Gazette, 17 Jan. 1805, 3; Sellers Moulds Finished, 27 Mar. 1794: double crown, wrapping; Sellers Moulds Finished, 11 Aug. 1800: writing demy watermarked WY & C° and fleur-de-lis, and post watermarked WY & C° and posthorn; Sellers Moulds Finished, 7 June 1804: extra post, watermarked W YOUNG 1804; Sellers Moulds Ordered, 4 Jan. 1808: double cap, watermarked WY & C°; Carey Papers, 2:628; Carey Papers, 4:1335; Census of 1820, reel 17, item 26; Young Papers.

DELAWARE [laid] — printed doc., a check drawn on a Philadelphia merchant in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 1795 (NYHS; countermark only?); mss., Petersburg, Va., 1796 (Carey Papers, 8:2806; countermark only?); mss., Philadelphia, Pa., 1801 (Gravell & Miller 2002, wmk 317; countermark only?); mss., Pittsburgh, Pa., 1802 (AAS; countermark only?).


Beaver Valley


John Farra operated a small saw mill at this location and a large woolen factory, which burned down around 1824 and had been partially rebuilt in 1826. He converted it to paper manufacture sometime before 1830, when it was being operated by William and John Gilmore (formerly foreman of the Ivy Mill [Pa. Mill 21]). Farra took over the business after they left about a year later (perhaps to run another mill in the vicinity; see the GILMOUR watermarks in Gravell & Miller 2002, wmks 385, 386, 500). References: Pearson 1826, 24; Ashmead 1884, 318; McLane Report, 2:780.


Note: The 1813 date cited by Gravell & Miller for wmk 365 must have been either mistranscribed or misinterpreted because Farra did not go into the papermaking business until after 1826.

After Farra died in 1832, the mill passed into the hands of his son Daniel Farra. References: Wilkinson 1975, 32; Sellers Order Book, 23 June 1836: repairing cap moulds.


When Daniel Farra died in 1860, his son-in-law Francis Tempest kept the business going as sole proprietor and sole employee, tending production, marketing, and sales completely on his own for more than forty years. A photograph of him at the controls of a ram-shackle cylinder machine is in Wilkinson 1975. He ran his do-it-yourself cylinder during the day and a single engine day and night, six days a week, producing in that time 1,500 pounds of tissue manila said to be “the finest of its kind.” References: Weeks 1916, 165; Wilkinson 1975, 32–34; Snell 1927; Lockwood 1882, 29.