



# Abandoned Manufactures of Utah

SOME NEGLECTED INDUSTRIES



RECENTLY the owners of the Provo Woolen mills decided to offer the factory for sale, thus forecasting the possible rehabilitation of perhaps the greatest manufacturing industry ever conducted within the state, which brings to mind the fact that for a number of years past manufacturing in Utah has been in its decadence, and this, too, in spite of the added facilities for the establishment of manufacturing plants never possessed by the people of the state in years gone by.

When the pioneers entered Utah in 1847, they were a thousand miles from the nearest source of any kind of supplies. Everything they had in the shape of food and clothing, for the first few years, consisted either in what they had brought with them from the east, or what they imported from the state from which they had turned their faces westward. The difficulties encountered in freightage manufactured articles this distance determined the leaders of that pioneer band to institute as far as possible means for making themselves what they might in the way of daily necessities in the problem of sustaining life, and as a result all manner of manufacturing concerns were established, on a small scale, it is true, but with the determination by co-operative effort, to render themselves independent of eastern sources of supply.

Thus, from small beginnings, enterprises of considerable magnitude rose and flourished for a time, and then, with the advent of the iron horse, bringing in its wake cheaper transportation, the products of the world were brought to the doors of the people at a rate which the meager resources and crude machinery of the home manufacturers were unable to meet, resulting in the gradual dying out of the home institutions.

Utah at different times boasted of one of the leading woolen manufacturing institutions of the country; a type foundry which furnished letters for printing the only paper in the state in those days; a paper mill manufacturing the material on which the newspaper was printed; a glass factory of no mean dimensions, besides other manufacturing plants producing at home the needs of the isolated population, and it is with the history of these departed industries, briefly treated, that this article has to deal.

## TYPE FOUNDRY.

THE initial letter appearing at the beginning of this paragraph is a letter from the first font of display type ever cast in Utah. It is a Gothic great primer "Cap. T" and the appearance of the complete font of type at the time caused great rejoicing among the newspaper men and job printers of the time. The type was made in the Deseret News type foundry, and is still lying in its cases in the News job department. The foundry was located on the top floor of the old Deseret News building, and the first man to make type in the state was James H. McLaren, who came to Utah from Europe and began casting type about the year 1855. He was a skilled workman and understood his business, but was of an erratic disposition, and did not remain with the type foundry any great length of time.

McLaren was succeeded in the making of type by Thomas Sleight, an Englishman. Sleight succeeded very well and worked up a great quantity of old type into new faces. The machinery used in the old days in the casting of type was the same as used up to a quite recent period by the modern type foundries of the country, but the chief difficulty attending the industry was that it was impossible to make successful matrices, or type patterns, and the type was not of even alignment, and with the advent of railroad transportation, typemaking now became unprofitable. The News was also the pioneer in the electrotyping line in the state. McLaren made the first electrotypes to be produced in Utah, making the matrices himself.

## WOOLEN INDUSTRY.

ONE of the earliest industries established in pioneer Utah was that of manufacturing articles of wearing apparel from wool. The first factory built was in the very early days at Sugar House, known as the Brigham Young mill. President Young and A. O. Smoot were the prime movers in the establishment of this mill, and it was conducted with varying success for several years.

The next mill to be built was the Wasatch Woolen mill built near Parley's canyon, by A. O. Smoot, John Sharp, and Robert T. Burton. This was the mill which was threatened with being washed out by the waters from the canal built from Cottonwood for the conveying of the granite rock from the Cottonwood quarry for the Salt Lake temple, which was one of the reasons for the abandonment of the canal.

Some time afterward William Jennings bought out the Smoot, Sharp and Burton mill and built another factory in the Nineteenth ward in Salt Lake City. This Mr. Jennings and associates conducted for a number of years, until the plant was absorbed by the big woolen plant at Provo. Other mills were established at Ogden, where the Farris erected a plant and which was successfully conducted up to a few years ago. At Logan a woolen mill was projected, and the walls for the factory were built of native stone, but that is as far as the industry got in Logan. The walls of the old building, which was situated in the eastern part of the town, are now a picturesque ruin, covered with moss and ivy.

There were woolen factories established also at Beaver in the south, and at Brigham City in the north, and both of these were run with more or less success for some years, but conditions became unfavorable for the continuation of the factories, and one by one they closed their doors. There is only one woolen factory in operation at the present time in the state, as far as is known, and that is the Baron mill at Hyrum, in Cache valley. This mill has hung on through thick and thin, and the factory, while not a pretentious affair at all, is conducted at a profit to the proprietor and a considerable amount of woolen fabric is produced every year.

The largest of the woolen factories established in Utah, however, was that erected at Provo, the foundation for the building having been laid on May 28, 1870. The site was selected by President Young after seeking for a suitable place to build a large plant, and Provo was chosen, it is said because of the superb water power to be had for the factory.

The first wool was carded in the Provo factory October 4, 1872. President Young was the first president of the company, which was known as the Timpanogos Manufacturing company. At his death A. O. Smoot succeeded him as president, and the mill for years was managed by J. Fred Smoot, son of President Smoot, and now United States Senator from Utah. Here the wool manufacturing industry attained its greatest success in

Utah, four large buildings being required to house the machinery and employees of the factory.

"The Provo mills used about 1,000,000 pounds of wool a year," said Senator Smoot, in speaking of the palmy days at the Provo factory. "The product turned out was valued at about \$450,000. We employed on an average from 200 to 225 people—men, women and boys and girls. Ninety-five per cent of our goods was shipped to Cincinnati, New York, Chicago and Baltimore, and other eastern cities. I was connected with the mills as manager up to the year 1902, about two years before the mills were closed down. The last year or two, I understood, the factory was unfortunate in having a large amount of wool destroyed in the scouring process, something like \$50,000 worth of wool being lost in this way, and this was one of the contributing causes which resulted in the closing down of the factory."

"It is not a question of making the wool manufacturing business pay in this state. It has been demonstrated that the business can be made to pay. But there are so many disadvantages to be met and so many leaks that have to be guarded against that the risk is greater away from the great wool centers of the country. It is necessary to have not only a manufacturer at the head of the institution, but an executive man as well, familiar with conditions as to help, etc. The Provo mills are in first class shape today, equipped with the most modern machinery and with every facility for successfully manufacturing wool. The plant may be offered for sale, and if sold I look to see a most successful woolen manufacturing industry carried on at that place."

## PAPER MAKING.

THE first paper made in Utah," said Charles John Lambert, a pioneer of '49, who is now a resident of Granger ward, "was made early in the 60s by Thomas Howard, who died just a few years ago. Howard came from England, where he learned to make paper by hand, and it was by the hand method that the first paper in Utah was manufactured in the fall of 1861. They had no machinery, except a hydraulic press, used to press the water out of the rags after they had been soaked to the proper consistency. Mr. Howard spread the pulp out on a wire and with hydraulic pressure formed the thick sheets first produced."

"This was down in the old building at Sugar House ward, which had originally been erected for the manufacture of sugar, but that industry was abandoned and the building was used for a paper mill. A sample of the thick paper was carried to Ireland about that time, and a son of Erin on seeing it said it was some of 'Brigham Young's everlasting parchment.'"

"After a few years Howard left the employ of the paper mill and he was succeeded by a man by the name of John Caldwell, who did not stay long and Howard again returned. Afterward Michael Grace was employed, and he became offended for some reason and then Mr. Howard was induced to return, and it was then that I became connected with the paper making industry. I started in keeping books for the mill, but soon learned to make paper. Howard left again toward the end of the year 1865, and C. P. Johnson of Colorado took the paper mill on contract. Johnson made good, and after his engagement was at an end I took the mill on contract and manufactured paper. I was with the mill for 19 years, and during that time the new mill at Cottonwood was erected and furnished with a lot of new machinery. The Cottonwood plant cost in the neighborhood of \$150,000. About the year 1888 I was kicked in the head by a horse, and I lay for weeks between life and death. After I recovered I went onto a farm, and did not re-enter the paper making business. The machinery was removed from Sugar to Cottonwood in the winter of 1882-83, and in 1884 John Bonner was installed as paper maker."

"Nathan Staker succeeded Bonner as paper-maker, and was employed in that capacity when the Cottonwood mill burned down in 1892."

"We manufactured paper from rags, mostly, but I used a great deal of wood pulp also. I remember that fully 300 cords of wood were used in making paper, the quaking asp being utilized mostly for the purpose. The color of the wood paper was not so good as that produced from rags, but it was adapted for the printing of newspapers, and The Deseret News was printed on the wood paper for a long time. A 'rag bureau' was maintained at The News office, and everybody, of high and low degree, made no hesitancy of taking their bundles of rag to the newspaper office where they received their pay for the old material. We shipped several carloads of paper to Colorado,

where it found a ready market."

"Some idea of the quality of paper we produced in the finer varieties may be had when it is known that John Nicholson's book, on the martyrdom of Joseph Standing, was printed on our paper; also other books written at the time."

"Finally the paper mill at Cottonwood was destroyed by fire, and it was decided to sell the machinery for old iron, and this ended the making of paper in Utah."

## GLASS WORKS.

AN interesting development of the industrial growth of Utah was the establishment in the suburbs of Salt Lake City of large glass works. A company was formed about the year 1855 by local people, who subscribed \$10,000 for starting the industry, and Thomas E. Taylor, at one time business manager of The Deseret News, was made president of the company, with Hugh Watson manager. Other members of the company included Jacob Moritz, A. Fisher, Geo. F. Culmer, and others.

Mr. Taylor, who was president of the company, talked interestingly on the establishment, progress and decline of the glass industry. He said:

"Our company secured two and a half acres of land about a quarter of a mile west of the Warm Springs, in the northern part of the city, and built a large one story brick building for the purpose of making articles in glass. The actual work of the factory began early in the spring of 1856. We secured suitable for making glass in endless quantities from the mountain side just east of the factory, where we also secured the lime necessary in melting the sand. The other ingredients used for this purpose was cement, and this, too, we were able to get near at hand."

"The industry was very successful, and we employed five or six glass blowers, and quite a number of men hauling sand, tending furnace, etc., besides a number of boys and girls packing bottles. We manufactured fruit bottles of the Mason patent, which we secured permission to use, beer bottles and soda water bottles. The trade of Z. C. M. I. and many other stores was given us, and we shipped carloads of bottles into Soda Springs in Idaho. All the beer bottles used in the state were also made at our factory. We used coal for fuel, and consumed as much as 300 tons of this material every month."

"The prospects were very favorable for a year or two, and the factory did well. The business became involved financially, however, on account of failure of some of the stockholders to pay their stock subscriptions, and on account of difficulties in securing payment for several carloads of bottles shipped out. Times grew hard and money became stringent, until finally about the year 1859 it was voted to discontinue the manufacture of glass."

"The same mountain of sand remains where it was and the same opportunities for the manufacture of glass exist today as did then. But the old works were completely destroyed, according to my best recollection, and the work of resuscitating the glass industry has thus far never been attempted."

## MANUFACTURE OF IRON.

WHEN George A. Smith, Henry Lunt, George Wood, Joseph Chatterley, Thomas Bladen and others first set foot in Iron county, they found much iron there, and decided that Iron county should become the manufacturing center of Utah. The settlement in Iron was made with that intention, and the people faithfully tried to carry out the designs of the leaders in establishing a manufacturing of iron. The ores were taken from the ground, thousands of dollars were expended in the erection of a building and procuring manufacturing machinery and the blast furnace in full operation remains a vivid memory to this day with the older residents of that section. But transportation facilities were limited, as well as capital, and the iron making industry languished and finally was abandoned early in the 60s.

## MANUFACTURE OF OIL.

IN the year 1861 Heber C. Kimball brought to successful operation a mill for the manufacture of oil from flax seed. After a number of unsuccessful experiments, President Kimball, with the assistance of Thomas Lawson and William J. Silver, machinists, placed in operation two hydraulic presses which pressed out ten gallons of oil per day. An account of the establishment of the industry at the time, printed in The Deseret News, gave the information that it was expected that soon a sufficient quantity of this oil would be

manufactured to supply the needs of the people of the territory. An advertisement carried in the columns of The News announced that pure flax seed oil would be sold by the manufacturers at \$5 per gallon; that the sum of \$2.50 would be paid per bushel for flax seed, or that oil would be exchanged for the seed at the rate of a half gallon of oil for a bushel of seed. A great deal of time and money was spent in perfecting the plant for manufacturing the oil, and the industry flourished until the raising of flax was abandoned and the advent of the railroad brought in competition which made the further production of the fluid unprofitable.

## COTTON INDUSTRY.

DURING the spring of 1861 President Brigham Young and other leading men made a trip through southern Utah. They passed through Parowan, Cedar City and St. George, and noticed the start which had been made in the raising of cotton. President Young was much impressed with what he saw and at the following October conference several hundred families were called to go south to strengthen the settlements already there and to raise cotton. The colony was headed by George A. Smith, Erastus Snow and Horace S. Eldredge. These settlers went vigorously to work and the following year the first cotton crop of any consequence—about 100,000 pounds—was gathered. Joseph Horne, formerly of Salt Lake City, had charge of the cotton industry.

A cotton factory was built at Parowan in 1861, by a Mr. Hanks, and the crop of the southern planters was shipped there for several years, but in 1869-70 the Washington cotton factory was built near St. George, and all the local cotton product was handled at that mill for many years.

Machinery was added later to the factory for the weaving of silk, but this, like the cotton industry, was doomed to annihilation through the stress of competition and unfavorable conditions.

## BASKET MAKING.

THE record of the first basket making in Salt Lake City is in June, 1862, when Job Smith and Elijah Pearce announced that they had material on hand and proposed to supply the trade with all kinds of baskets, including bushels, half bushels and clothes baskets, children's chairs, and cradles, bird cages and fish traps. Among the other useful articles made by this enterprising firm were also included bonnet baskets, truck-lid hampers, and chair bottoms. The firm occupied quarters then lately vacated by Felt & Allen opposite to Walker Bros' new store. Mr. Smith is said to be a resident of Salt Lake, and remembers well his first venture in the manufacturing line, while his partner, Elijah Pearce, moved into the north counties and made baskets in Cache for a number of years.

## ROPE.

IN the fall of 1861 W. A. McMaster and Hugh Moon started up a rope and twine factory, "in the east end of the First ward, Great Salt Lake City." The factory was called the "Young Sam Rope Factory" and the proprietors announced that they were prepared to work up hemp, flax or hair on shares or otherwise into ropes, twines, lassos and clunches, well and tackle ropes. From the early accounts of the time, the rope manufacturing business progressed very well for a considerable period, but it finally went the way of so many other industries begun in those early days.

## MATCHES.

THAT matches were among the articles manufactured in the early days is apparent from the following notice which appeared in The Deseret News of February 26, 1862: "A Good Article.—Mr. Amos Fielding manufactures a good article of friction matches, which will ignite when required, a recommendation not applicable to some which have been on sale this winter." Mr. Fielding's advertisement, which appeared in the same issue, conveyed the information that he manufactured his matches in the Fifth ward south of the school house, and that the general depot was at Henry E. Phelps', east Temple street, nearly opposite Bishop Hunter's residence.

The making of matches soon became a very profitable industry, to judge by the number who participated in their manufacture. Following Mr. Fielding's lead, Robert Greer took up the business, and soon H. Findlay branched out in the business of making matches. Nelson's match factory, in the Thirteenth ward, advertised that the best and cheapest matches in the whole territory were

made there, offering a box containing between four and five hundred matches for 15 cents.

## THE SILK INDUSTRY.

PERHAPS the first silk cocoons to be produced in Utah to any considerable extent was in 1862, when Octave Ursenbach exhibited in Salt Lake City some three thousand of the silk balls, which were said to be the product of an original stock of two dozen worms. The cocoons were, according to an account of the remarkable exhibition of the industry of the silk worms, of excellent color and in good condition. It was from this beginning that the adaptability of the soil to grow mulberry trees capable of producing the finest quality of silk was demonstrated, and resulting in the more extended development of the silk industry which afterward followed.

From this humble beginning grew an industry which reached statewide proportions. It was demonstrated that the soil of the state was admirably adapted to the raising of the mulberry tree, whose leaves fed the worms which produced the cocoons.

In 1896 the first state legislature passed a law providing for the organization of the Utah silk commission, and appropriating money for the encouragement of raising silk worms by paying a bounty of 25 cents per pound for the production of silk cocoons. The commission was appointed and Mrs. Zina D. H. Young became its first president and Mrs. Margaret A. Caine its first and only secretary. The other members of the original commission were Mrs. Ann C. Woodbury, of St. George, Mrs. Isabelle E. Bennett of Salt Lake and Mrs. Cazier, of Nephi.

The work which consisted chiefly in the education of the people in the growing of mulberry trees and silk worms, was successfully conducted for nine years. The industry grew and "schools" were held in St. George, Boxelder, Weber, Cache, Wayne, and Emery counties, and in other sections of the state, too, the business flourished. Utah silk was the best produced anywhere. A ready market was to be had for all the silk which could be produced.

In 1905 the state legislature passed a law turning the equipment and property of the silk commission over to the Agricultural college with the idea of making it a portion of the work of the college to conduct experiments in silk culture and to carry on the work so well begun by the silk commission. But the same legislature which abolished the commission failed to provide a further appropriation for carrying on this special work, and since that time little has been done with the advancement of the silk industry in Utah.

The soil of the state is especially adapted to raise mulberry trees; the silkworm lives and thrives nowhere better than here, and the quality of silk produced heretofore has been pronounced unsurpassed, and it would seem that nothing remains in the way of successfully reviving the "departed industry" to the benefit and profit of the whole state.

## SCHOOL SLATES.

DURING the month of March, 1862, the first article of school slates manufactured in Utah was brought to Salt Lake from Wellsville, Cache county, where Robert Wardrop had discovered a slate quarry and established a factory on a small scale. Mr. Wardrop said that he had found inexhaustible quantities of the material, and proposed to make school slates for the whole territory of Utah.

## HAT MAKING.

John C. Tatton established a men's hats manufactory in the second house east of the court house, in the Fourteenth ward, and by the superiority of workmanship and the economy of his charges, he guaranteed to merit the patronage of the people of the city.

Mrs. C. R. Savage was among the early manufacturers of ladies' hats, as was also Mrs. E. G. Read, while George Bonnell, of the Nineteenth ward, advertised that he was the proprietor of a well regulated cloth weaving establishment. Thomas Lyon was also engaged in the weaving of cloth, in the Twentieth ward, and after his death the business was continued by James McGhie, who announced as his specialty a first class article of "home-spun."

## MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES.

SOME of the smaller manufacturing industries which flourished in the early times were those of nails, combs and bonnet pills. George J. Taylor announced in 1863 that he was prepared to work up old iron into nails, guaranteed unsurpassed in the territory. Mr. Taylor's factory was located in the Nineteenth ward, where he paid liberally for scrap iron and charcoal, and produced nails in quantities to suit.

The Deseret comb factory was situated on East Temple street, three doors south of Jennings' store, and was conducted by James Saddler. Agreeing to accept in exchange for straight combs, back combs and curly combs all kind of "grain and good pay." Mr. Saddler continued the manufacture of these most useful articles successfully for a number of years.

J. E. Johnson was the genius who brought into existence the household remedy, Compound Bonnet Pills. The pills, together with the Essence of Life, Nerve and Bone Liniment, Conklin Salve, and a complete assortment of family medicines, were manufactured in the laboratory of the inventor, at Spring Lake Villa, Utah county, Deseret, and the home made remedies attained a wide sale for years throughout the territory.

At North Ogden, in Weber county, Thomas Fairbrass opened up a leather tannery in 1863, where he made leather on shares, giving those bringing hides to his tannery half the leather produced. Philip Pugsley and William Jennings conducted for many years successful tanneries in Salt Lake City.

S. J. Lees, who was located at the "sack factory" on Emigration street, engaged in the manufacture of the homely but necessary article, the shoe peg, while Thomas Hawkes, at T. D. Brown's store on Main street, carried on an umbrella and parasol manufactory.

A great many other fields were entered by the people in the early days in the way of manufacturing the articles required by the pioneers, who were a thousand miles away from any source of supply, which, upon the arrival of the railroad became unnecessary, or at least unprofitable on account of eastern competition. But that the people were equal to the requirements and sought to become self sustaining when no other supply was to be had, is amply shown by the account given of the industries started in this state when it was but an oasis in a stretch of two thousand miles of uninhabited country.



Big Cottonwood Paper Mill