

THE EPHRATA PAPER MILL.

A paper was read a short time ago before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania upon the subject of paper making and the different water marks used by the Willcox family, whose history the learned speaker traced through the several generations down to the present time.

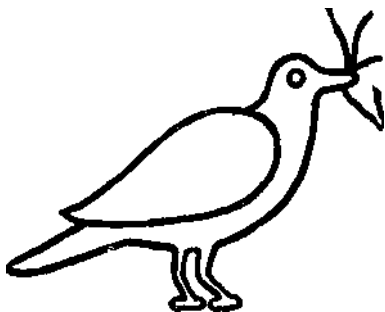
Until within a few years ago the general impression has been, and the idea is propagated even now, that paper making in America had its origin in the Ivy Mills on Chester Creek in Chester (now Delaware) county, Pennsylvania, in the year 1714, and that Thomas Willcox was the first paper maker. This statement has been repeated so often that even standard writers have incorporated it in their works.

Now, the facts of the case are, as shown by the above speaker, that the old Ivy mills of Thomas Willcox were not erected until the year 1729, or shortly afterwards, and from the outset became one of the leading commercial paper factors in the Colonies, he having Benjamin Franklin as a patron, who started his printing office in the **same** year. One of the specialties of the Willcox Mill **was** the making of paper for notes or currency, and it has been claimed that they made the first paper of that kind and used for that purpose in this Province—a claim which I will show you cannot be maintained. However, as a matter of fact, the Willcox Mills have supplied most all the paper used for currency purposes from the time when a thick pulpy mass was used for Provincial and Continental currency with its gruesome legend, to *counterfeit is death*,

down through all the various conditions of our country ; including the peculiar silk "Onion skin" paper of our old State banks as well as the localized fibre paper upon which our national bonds and currency are printed at the present day.

During the course of this paper a statement was made in reference to the watermarks used ; further, that they were adopted a few years previous to the outbreak of the Revolution, and that the designs had to be imported from England, as they could not be produced here, until the experiments of Nathan Sellers during the Revolution made it possible.

Now so much for the Willcox episode.



EARLIEST WATERMARK OF WILCOX PAPER MILL.

As a matter of history, the first paper mill that ground pulp within the American colonies was set up in Germantown, or, more properly speaking, within the German township in Philadelphia county. This was prior to the year 1690. And, what is more, the mill had a special watermark of its own. The founder and originator of the enterprise was one William Ryttinghuisen, now anglicized to Rittenhouse, and I am pleased to say that some of his direct descendants are enrolled among the membership of the Pennsylvania German Society.

An account of this paper mill appears in Richard Frame's poem, "A Short Description of Pensilvania ; or a Relation of What Things are Known, Enjoyed and like to be Discovered in said Province." This was printed by William Bradford, at Philadelphia, in 1692. Four years later (1696) Judge John Holme also wrote a poem in the same strain ; it was entitled : " A True Relation of the Flourishing State of Pennsylvania," wherein the reference to the Germantown paper mill is as follows :

PRINTER.

" Here dwelt a printer and i find
That he can both print books and bind ;
He wants not paper, ink or skill,
He's owner of a paper mili.
The paper mill is here hard by,
Ind makes good paper frequently,
But the printer as i do here tell.
is gone into New York to dwell.
No doubt but he will lay up bags
if he can got good store of rags.
Kind friend, when thy old shift is rent
Let it to th' paper mill be sent."

Thus it will be seen there can be no question whatever as to the priority of the introduction of paper making into the American colonies. It may seem, somewhat strange to such persons who have not devoted any study to this subject, but merely accepted as truth the biased statements as to the ancient mill on the banks of the Chester creek, when they learn that not only was printing paper made at the first Rittenhouse mill on the banks of the Wissahickon, but good writing paper as well, both white and blue, as will be seen from the agreement made in 1697 with William Bradford, the printer.

Then, again, from the earliest establishment of the enterprise the Rittenhouses, father and son, made use of a water mark. The first distinctive one adopted by the Rittenhouses was the word "Company," to designate the original partnership under which the industry was started.

PENSRLV

A

VIZ

The next water mark used were the letters " W. R." on one half of the sheet, and upon the other half was a clover leaf **in a** shield surmounted by a kind of a crown, beneath which was the word " Pennsylvania." I have here a fac-simile of these watermarks, as they appear upon a deed signed by Francis Daniel Pastorius and Daniel Falkner. Now, so far as currency or money paper is concerned, the first issues of Pennsylvania currency in 1723 were printed upon just such paper, the product of the Pennsylvania Dutch (if I may be pardoned for the use of the term) paper mill on the Wissahickon.

Then if any one wishes to take the trouble to visit the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, or the Ridgway Library in Philadelphia, and inspect the files of the *American Weekly Mercury*, the first newspaper ever printed within the British Middle Colonies, they will find impinged upon each sheet of the early numbers the letters "K. L.," standing for Klans Rittenhouse, the name of the paper maker.

The second paper mill started in the American colonies was the venture of one William De Wees, a brother-in-law of Nicolas Rittenhouse. This mill was built in the year 1710 on the west side of Wisahickon creek, in that part of Germantown knowu in early times as Crefeld, near the line of the present Montgomery county.

The third mill within the Province appears to have been the Willcox venture upon the Chester creek.

The fourth paper mill to be set up within the Province, and which was perhaps the most important one in regard to its output, was located upon the romantic banks of the Cocalico, at Ephrata, in Lancaster county.

It is upon this enterprise that I wish to speak, and bring to your llotice a few

facts which appear thus far to have escaped the attention of local historians and students. *Die Papier-Muhle der Bruders chafft*, like other industrial and commercial enterprises of the Zionitic Brotherhood, originated in the fertile brains of the Eckerling brothers. It was a distinctive enterprise with a dual object.

First. To furnish paper for the publications of the *Mystic Brotherhood* and the various imprints of the Society.

Secondly. It was intended as a commercial venture, to furnish a revenue to the Community.

Unfortunately, no records are known to the writer which would give the exact date of the setting up of the paper mill upon the Cocalico. From the meagre data in the *Chronicon Ephretense* we find an allusion to the grist mill in Chapter 22, which places the purchase of the mill some time prior to the death of Brother Agonius (Michael Wohifarth), which occurred May 20, 1741. It is but reasonable to assume that the other mills and industrial establishments were set up in rapid succession, and that at the time of the culmination of the trouble between Beissel and the Eckerling brothers and the expulsion of the latter, September 4, 1745, the enterprise of the four Brothers had developed the resources of the mystic Community of the Cocalico until it became the greatest industrial establishment in the American colonies.

Again referring to the *Chronicon*, we learn that on the morning of September 6, 1747, a great calamity overtook the Community. This was nothing less than the destruction of three of its mills by fire.

The annalist of the Community, commenting upon the calamity, writes (Chapter 27) that at that time the Community owned and operated a grist mill, with three runs of stones; a skillfully-

built oil mill, with stones the like of which none before existed in America ; a fulling mill, a saw mill and a paper mill.

Upon the night in question the grist, oil and fulling mills became a prey to the incendiary's torah. The saw and paper mills were only **saved** from destruction by the hard labors of the Brothers and Sisters of the Community, with such of the neighbors as were attracted to the scene.

Brother Agrippa adds in a foot note, " That the mill had been of great benefit to the households for the poor Solitary now for nearly fifty years." As this was written in 1785 or 1786, it would place the setting up of the grist mill about the year 1736. The above quotations from the *Chronicon Ephretense* appear to be the only direct official records left to us of the commercial enterprises of the Community, as upon the expulsion of the Eckerlings all records and papers are said to have been destroyed upon the order of Beissel. The only additional data relating to the paper mill known to the writer, and having a semblance to authenticity, are three entries in the diary of Brother "xenon" (Jacob Funk):

(1.) 1761—*Den, 26, Juni hat Br : Melchy die Babir Muhl verlassen.*

[(1.) 1761—On **June 26, Bro. Melchy severed his connection** with the paper mill.]

(2.) 1770—*Den 4, September ist oder sind OBADJA und KENAN von der BABIR•MILL gegangen und obadia ist in Virginia gestorben und 1780 im May ist Henan wider nach EPHRATA geKomen.*

[(2.) 1760—On September 4, Obadja and Kenai left the paper mill. Obadia died in Virginia, and in May, 1780, Kenan returned to Ephrata.]

(3.) 1784—*Den, September morgens etwa zwischen 2 und 3 uhr ist das neue Muhlhaus in brand gesteckt worden, aber doch glucklich wider geloecht worden.*

[(3.) 1784—On September 1, between 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning, the new mill building was set on fire, but luckily, the fire was extinguished.]

From the above it would appear that the Funk family, who were practical paper makers, had charge of the paper mill. This family consisted of the father, Martin Funk, his wife, Magdalena, and two sons and a daughter—Samuel, born 1719; Jacob, born March 4, 1725, and Sophia, born 1727. The family first came to Ephrata in 1744 and settled in the immediate vicinity as "Householders." They came from the Conestoga country where they had lived since 1735. The mother, Magdalena, died January 14, 1745-6. Samuel then joined the Zionitic Brotherhood and henceforth became Brother Obadiah. April 20, 1747, Jacob followed his example, and closed his career under the monastic name of Kenon. Upon the following day Sophia became a "Rose of Saron," entered the convent and was enrolled as Sister Geuoveva, On April 22 the father was also admitted to the Brotherhood.

Now, in view of certain statements to be found in contemporary records, which set forth that the Ephrata paper mills produced more paper than any similar establishment in the colonies, it occurred to the writer that some notes or data might be found in the periodicals of the day bearing upon this branch of the provincial industry at Ephrata. In the long and persistent search for authentic information upon the subject, several interesting items were discovered.

The first one was in connection with the earliest Bible printed in America. It was, as you all know, a German one, and the title page bears the legend 1743. I allude to what is known as the "Sauer" Bible.

You will naturally ask, what has this to do with Ephrata ? Well, I will tell you. This monumental work, which had immortalized the Germantown printer, was printed upon paper made either in whole or part in the "*Bapier muhle der bruderschaft zu Ephrata.*" The edition was bound at Ephrata by the Brotherhood, and I feel pretty certain that if the records could be found they would show that a great part of the sheets were printed at Ephrata upon the old "Kloster presse," now reposing in the rooms of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Then, again, the fact was brought out that the greater part of the first edition of the American Bible was sold in Lancaster connty. It may be well to state at this point that at the time when Christopher Sauer finished his Bible in 1742-3 the bookbindery at Ephrata was the largest and best equipped bindery in the Colonies, and the only one who could undertake to bind an edition of great magnitude.

I will now present to you a few proofs in support of my argument. First, we will refer to Sauer's newspaper :

No. XLIII., dated February 16, 1744.
Der Hoch Deutsche Geschichts-Schreiber,
Odor : Sammlung Wichtiger Nachrichten
sus dem Natur-und Kirchen-Reich.

No. XL., November 16, 1743.

[The High-German news writer or faithful chronicler of important events in Nature and the Church.]

[No. 40—November 16, 1743.]

"Der Drucker (Sauer) Maohet bekant well er siehet, da^ys sehr wenige sind, welche ungebundene Bibeln begehren, u, er nicht so viel binden kan lessen, als in dieser kurtzen Zeit von ihm begehrt worden ob man wohl gem jedermann so gleich geholffen sahe ; Denjenigen welche nicht welt von Ephrata wohnen,

die können gegen ihre Quittungen und Zahlung des ubrigen daselbst eine gebundene oder ungebundene Bibel finden, und die nicht PRAENUMMERIRT haben, die können auch daselbst finden, und bestellen sie wie sie sie wollen gebunden haben, oder finden schon gebundene bey Samuel Eckerling. Von dorten sollen auch in die neue Stadt gebracht werden an H. Rieger, Doct. Med., in Lancaster."

[The printer (Sauer) announces since he finds that there are very few possessing unbound bibles, that he cannot bind them as rapidly as they are required, although he would like to see everyone satisfied, Those who do not live far from Ephrata can procure bound or unbound bibles for their payment and receipts. Those who have not yet subscribed, can procure them and order them bound as they may desire, or may find them already bound by Samuel Eckerling. They can also be procured from H. Rieger, M. D., in Lancaster.]

From the above it would appear that the whole edition of the so-called "Sauer" Bible was at that time in Ephrata, viz., November 16, 1743.

The next interesting item is a notice in the same paper, under date of February 16, 1744 :

" Weilen • in Ephrata nicht so viel Bibeln können gebunden werden, als in Lancaster by Herrn Rieger bestellt werden, so berichtet man, dass nachstans sollen gebundene dahin gesandt werden."

[Since there cannot be so many Bibles bound in Ephrata, as were engaged of Mr. Rieger, we suggest that hereafter bound volumes be sent there.]

This notice certainly shows the devout character of the early German settlers of Lancaster county. Two months later, April 16, 1744, Sauer notifies the public that

" **Bey** H. Jacob Friedrich Rieger in der neuen Stadt Lancaster sind nun auch Bibeln zu haben von verschiedenem Band und Preiss."

[Bibles of different bindings and prices are now to be had of H. Jacob Friederich Rieger in the new State of Lancaster].

This same number of Sauer's newspaper makes mention of the expulsion of the Eckerlings :

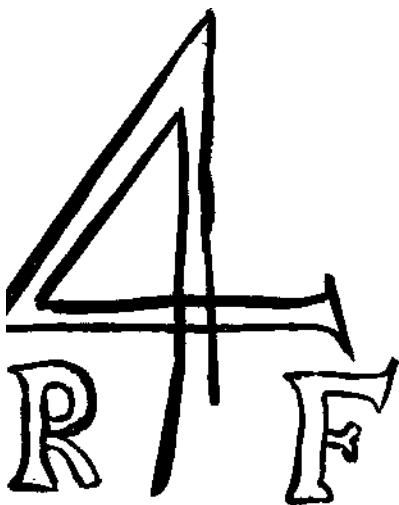
" Die Raporte vom Ausgang Verschiedener Bruder aus Zioll sind ungleich: Dass beyde Bruder Samuel u Israel Eckerling nebst Alexander Mack dem Getummel der Welt gantzlich zu entweichen und ihrem Puff u Zug gemass in ferne Wusten gegangen, nachdem sie ordentlich Abscheid genommen haben, dass ist gewiss ; dass sie aber heimlich hinweg, und nach Bethlehem gegangen seyn, um. sich daselbst Welber geben zu lossen, a dass ist entweder Missverstand oder beyden seiten zum Spott erdichtet."

[The reports concerning the departure of various Brothers out of Zion differ. It is certain that the two brothers, Samuel and Israel Eckerling, also Alexander Mack, were determined to leave the bustle of the world completely, and accordingly went to the far West after they had taken formal leave. That they went to Bethlehem to procure wives is either a misunderstanding or fiction, created on both sides for the purpose of ridicule.]

We now come to the second item of interest. I allude to the watermarks used by the Ephrata Community, **some** of which will occasionally be found in the sheets of the Sauer Bible, the paper in which is by no means of either uniform texture or quality.

The product of the *Bapier Muhle des Kloster's* was not limltd to coarse printing paper, and what was known as " Macalatur," but they made fine grades of

both writing and printing paper as well. All of the latter grades are marked with one of their distinctive watermarks. The ordinary grades of printing paper, such, for instance, as was used in the *Martyr Spiegel*, were made upon plain sieves, without any watermark. I may here state that the wire sieves used in making the various kinds of paper were a local product, being made by one Isaac Langle, of Germantown, who died about the time when



WATERMARK FROM SAUER BIBLE, FIRST EDITION.

the Sauer Bible was being printed. Early in the year 1744 Friedrich Ochs and Johannes Eckstein advertised for sale a "Siebmachers-weberstuhl mit einen dazu geborigen eisern Schienen-zug u anders Zugehor."

[A wire-weaver's weaving frame, with an iron apparatus for wire drawing, and other belongings.]

The question of watermarks is a very interesting one, and I have a few here to show you and illustrate my remarks.



TB



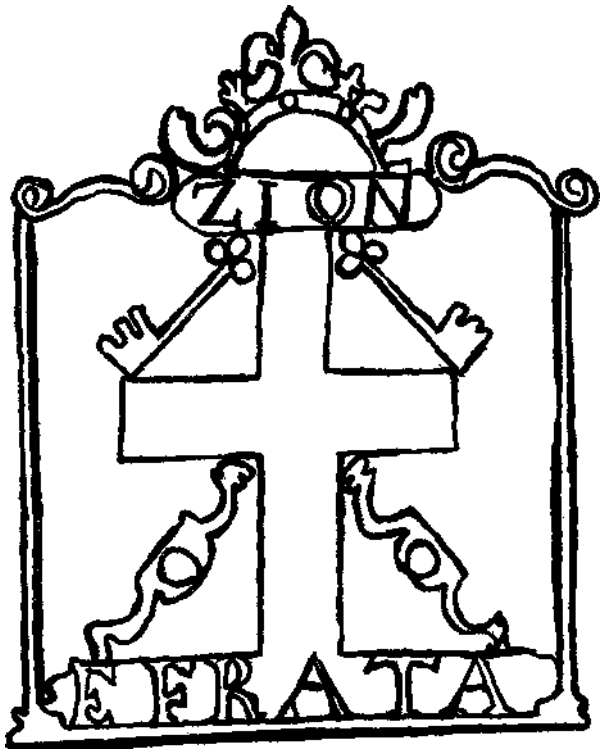
WATERMARKS OF THE EPHRATA PAPER MILL SUBSEQUENT TO 1744.

The first one is taken from the fly-leaf of a Sauer Bible. It is a crude home-made affair and was the private mark of the Funk family. It consists of a large figure four, the perfect number, below which are the letters R F.

The same watermark, F B, (Bruder Funk), without the figure "4," also appears in some of the subsequent publications of the Community, as you may see from the specimen I have taken from a page of the "*Theosophischephische Lectionen*," which was also printed in the year 1745.

The next one, and by far the most important one from a historical standpoint, is the design adopted by the Zionitic Brotherhood, and was intended for the distinctively mystical publications of that body of religious enthusiasts. It was evidently made at Ephrata, and crude as it is it bears the undeniable stamp of the Mystic Brotherhood. You will observe that it consists of a large Latin cross, surmounted by a scroll with the word "Zion." Two keys form right angles with the upright and arm of the cross. These keys have reference to the *Clavicula Salomonis*, or the "Keys of Solomon," a mystic book of the XVII. century which was held in high esteem by the Brotherhood. The cross, it will be seen, rests upon a panel bearing the legend "Ephrata." The whole design is surrounded by an ornamental scroll.

This watermark you will find in the *Hohe Zeugnisse* and a few other books printed at Ephrata up to the year 1745. The paper bearing this watermark was evidently made while the Eckerlings were still in control of the Community, as it does not appear to have been used after their expulsion from the Community. After that unfortunate episode in Ephrata's history, there appear several new watermarks, which were continued in use



WATERMARK OF THE ZIONITIC BROTHERHOOD USED PRIOR TO THE EXPULSION OF THE ECKERLINGS.

for a number of years. The oldest seem to have been a "post horn " and a "heart shape " with the letters " E F" in the centre. These two designs were usually used together upon opposite sides of the sheet. A crude crown was also used frequently in connection with the post horn. Another design was a large " E F " in letters about an inch high, upon a book made of fine writillg paper, now in the priceless collection of the Hon. Samuel W. Pennypacker. We find the full word "Efrata " impinged upon the pages of the volume in letters about three-quarters of an inch high.

There are without doubt still other watermarks in existence dating from this old Community, whose glory has long since departed ; imprints which may shed still more light upon our subject, and it it were only within the possibilities of the future that some fragments of the commercial records of the Community and escaped the ruthless bonfire made in the meadow on the Cocalico on that September day in the year of grace 1744, to gratify the whims of Conrad Beissel. I say, were such fragments to come to light, they would doubtless show that the *Papier Muhle der Bruderschaft zu Ephrata* was one of **the most important enterprises** of the Provillcial period.

APPENDIX.

The Dr, Jacob Frederick Reiger alluded to in this article as Christopher Sauer's agent at Lancaster was a prominent physician of Lancaster during the middle of the last century. He was born in the Palatinate, and came to Pennsylvania in September 12, 1734. (See Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, vol. 17.) He was a brother of the Rev. John Bartholomew Reiger, the, celebrated pioneer of the Reformed Church in Lancaster County, and who also was a physician, and a graduate of the University of Heidelberg, and who came to Pennsylvania in 1731. No doubt Dr. Jacob Frederick Reiger was also a university man, and this, united with his profession, gave him prominence in the community. The fact that he was Sauer's agent for the sale of his bibles is entirely new. He is best known through the unfortunate duel in which his son, Dr. Jacob Reiger, was engaged with Stephen Chambers, formerly a captain in the 12th regiment of the Pennsylvania line, and one of the leading lawyers of the Lancaster bar. He died on January 2, 1762, aged 87 years. He is buried in the graveyard attached to the First German Reformed Church in Lancaster, by the side of his wife, Jane Reiger, who died January 25, 1773, aged 52 years, and his illustrious brother, Rev. John Bartholomew Reiger, who died March 11, 1769, having been born January 10, 1707. Dr. J. F. Reiger's tombstone states that he was an eminent surgeon.

Dr. Jacob Reiger, who as already stated, fought a duel with Captain Chambers. died October 20. 1793. aged

38 years, and is no doubt buried in the same graveyard, although there is no head stone to mark the spot, but the record of his death appears in the Church register. He died intestate and letters of administration were granted on his estate.

That Dr. Jacob Reiger was the son of Dr. Jacob Frederick Reiger is shown by the following extract from the latter's will, dated December 19, 1761, and probated shortly afterward by Edw. Shippen, Register, and recorded in book B. vol. 1., page 384, etc. : " I give and bequeath all my real and personal property to my wife Jane Reiger and my son Jacob Reiger. If Jacob shall die before arriving at 21 years then I give his share to the children of my brother John Bartholomew Reiger, Philip Gerhard Reiger, Adam Reiger and the children of my sister Catarina Reiger."

Inasmuch as the Reiger-Chamber's duel is said to have been the first one fought in Pennsylvania the facts are deemed of sufficient interest to be added here.

In the "Shippen Papers," under date of May 18, 1789, Col. Shippen writes from Lancaster to his brother, the Chief Justice : " I am extremely concerned to tell you that a most unfortunate duel happened last Monday, May 12, evening, between Dr. Reiger and Mr. Chambers, on a challenge of the former, for an affront received at a tavern. When each had fired one pistol shot without effect the seconds interfered, and proposals of accommodation were made, which Reiger could not be persuaded to agree to ; each then presented a pistol ; Chambers' snapped, but Reiger's discharged a ball through both his antagonist's legs. His wounds bled much, but for two days *were considered* not dangerous ; a mortification then ensued ; its progress up-

wards was great and rapid till Saturday morning, May 17, when it extended to his bowels and carried him off, to the most severe distress of the families and friends of both. The procession at his funeral in the evening was truly solemn and affecting. This melancholy subject has already too much agitated my mind to dwell on it longer, by relating the particular circumstances."

The subsequent correspondence which accompanies this letter on the " Shippen Papers " shows that the affront was offered to Dr. J. Reiger at Stokes' tavern, and that the duel occurred in the "Barrack yard at seven o'clock in the afternoon" (evening). The matter is referred to briefly in " Fithian's Journal."

Captain Chambers left a widow and several small children, and was a charter member of Lodge 43, F. & A. M. Stokes' tavern was the " Swan," located in Penn Square, and had formerly been owned by Matthias Slough. The affront offered was to the effect that Reiger was dressed in shabby attire, Chambers being in full regimentals. The duel is referred to in S. M. Sener's " Old Time Hostelryes " in Christian Culture, vol. 2, pp 138 ; also in Dr. W. H. Egle's Historical Register, vol. 2, page 279 ; in Dr. Welchans' " History of Lodge 43, F. & A. M.," page 207-8; and the Pennsylvania Archives, vol 10, second series, page 759.

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Willcox, Thomas.

Ephrata Paper Mill (Ephrata, Pa.)

Paper mills--Pennsylvania--Ephrata.

Watermarks--Pennsylvania.

Paper mills--History.

Ephrata (Pa.)--History.

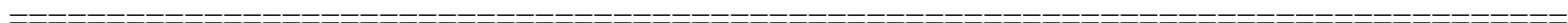
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