

EARLY INDUSTRIES.

The subject assigned to me for investigation is the "Early Industries Along the Conowingo" (formerly spelled Canarawa). The origin of the name I have been unable to determine. Tradition, and perhaps from a purely imaginative source, says it is an Indian name, meaning "canoe won't go." I feel much inclined to think the origin of the name is more closely allied to Scotch-Irish ingenuity than to Indian-like description. After much research and many pleasant conversations with the older residents' some of whom have spent more than three score years and ten in the immediate neighborhood, and aided by the notes some of my good friends have seen fit to give, I am now able to present to this esteemed body of researchers the following sketch. I am not self-confident that the work is all it should be' but rather verified as best I could from the means accessible.

The Conowingo is formed by the confluence of two small streams, whose origins are in springs situated on the range of Buck Hills, about two miles apart. The one runs southeast, the other southwest to the point of confluence, which is two miles southeast of the Buck and three miles southwest of Quarryville. From here, diagonally across the townships of East Drumore and Fulton, for a distance of thirteen miles, wanders this noble stream. It and its tributaries water the most fertile valleys of the above-mentioned townships. In the past and present the Conowingo, on account of its great fall, has furnished water power to turu the wheels of a furnace, a rolling mill,

a foundry (all of which proudly bore its name), a sickle factory, a sorghum factory, two cleaver mills, nine flour and feed mills and seven saw mills, all of which comprised the twenty-three business places of the Conowingo, and thirteen of which still testify to their usefulness by doing a thriving business.

Taking the headwaters as a starting point, rather than the oldest structure, for an individual consideration of these sites, we find Jacob Bair and his wife, Elizabeth, built a grist mill at this point in 1776. The mill was built of stone and covered with cedar shingles' brought from New Jersey. The timbers were of white oak' and, at the time of this writing, there remains a piece of timber 18 feet long and 18 inches square that is as sound as the day it was hewn. This mill stood until 1850, at which time its walls were so cracked as to be considered unsafe, and the wrought-iron nail-heads, which fastened the shingles, stood out like miniature posts above their worn surface. Then it was taken down and the burrs removed to the mill lately owned by Mr. Shultz. The mill property and adjacent lands were purchased from the Bairs by Jonathan Good in the year 1800. Mr. Good erected a furnace some fifty yards east of the mill' and in 1810 sold it to George and John Withers, of Black Rock fame.

From these gentlemen it passed into the hands of James Hopkins, Esq., of Lancaster city, and he took into partnership with him his brother-in-law' James Orrick, the firm being Hopkins & Orrick.

Conowingo was then a manufactory of stoves. Some of the old ten-plate stoves moulded there are still in use.

The Hopkins Furnace.

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of James Hopkins' to Conowingo. The old firm was now dissolved, and James M. took charge, and after his father's death, which occurred in 1834, he became sole owner and proprietor of Conowingo Furnace and all pertaining thereunto. In a few years the furnace was turned into a cold blast furnace for the manufacture of pig iron. This product of Conowingo became widely known for its hardness and enduring properties, and was much sought after for railroad purposes. The first rails laid on the Baltimore and Ohio road were made of Conowingo pig iron, and remained in use until supplanted by steel. In 1853 a bar of iron sent to the great London Exposition received honorable mention, and a certificate accompanied by a bronze medallion bust of Prince Albert were sent to Mr. Hopkins' and, at this date' are in the possession of his family at the old mansion.

Prior to and during the war, while charcoal iron commanded a high price, this plant was operated to advantage and profit. Lime stone was accessible at Quarryville. The extensive ore mines just north of Conowingo, owned by Mr. Hopkins, were exhaustively worked, and long lines of teams plied daily between the different points of supply and manufacture. The iron at this time was found desirable for the manufacture of guns, and during the war Admiral Dahlgren publicly commended its excellence for the casting of efficient guns for the service.

In 1868 the old furnace was blown out, it being the last of the numerous iron works of Lancaster county to succumb to the onward march of Father Time.

Anthracite coal, in the manufacture of iron, became so much cheaper than charcoal that it superseded it entirely.

Conowingo was a plant in its day that gave employment to many men

as well as horses and mules. It was a sort of grand depot, furnishing a ready market for the surplus grain of the neighborhood, and when its life had passed away it was found to be an old friend sadly missed.

On the site of the old furnace, making use of the wheel pit and race' was erected a modern mill in 1866' this being one hundred years from the time the first mill was built by Bair. Two years ago the new mill was refitted with the improved roller process machinery for the manufacture of flour' and a gasoline engine placed in position to assist in the duties required of this plant. Mr. Hopkins' death occurred in 1895, he being in his eighty-fifth year. He was one of the last of the old "Iron Masters" to go from us, and so closed a busy and useful career.

A Rolling Mill.

Conowingo rolling mill was situated about a mile and a half below the furnace, and was erected by John Neff, Francis Kendric, Thomas Crawford and George White, in August of 1813, entered into a partnership to purchase eighty-six acres of land adjoining the furnace property, and to erect a rolling and slitting mill thereon. This partnership continued about ten years' after which it became the property of Neff and Kendric, who sold it to Robert Coleman' the owner of the Cornwall furnace in Lebanon county. Coleman sold the mill to James Sproul, who had extensive interests on the Octorara, and in 1840 it became the property of James M. Hopkins by purchase. The mill was then operated for a short time by Mr. Riddle and lastly by Col. Peter Sides in 1843. The building has disappeared, and the floods have long since torn a hole through the dam breast, leaving only a ridge of earth stretching across a lonely meadow.

A Foundry Also.

In 1854 John Jordan erected a foundry about a mile below the old rolling mill, where a shop and saw mill had stood for some years. At that time it was called Jordan's foundry, but since it has passed into the hands of Martin Hess, and is now called Conowingo foundry.

Directly east of the foundry, over the brow of the hill, some three hundred yards, on the property belonging to the heirs of Harvey Long, is found what seems to be a peculiar wall. It ever a portion of a structure at all, it is undoubtedly that of the oldest in the neighborhood, for tradition is silent on the point, and the oldest residents only know that their fathers saw it there. It comes to the surface for nearly a hundred feet and then gradually runs into the ground. On top it is about two feet wide, and has the appearance of gradually broadening out, as though a battered wall built against a face of rocks. It resembles, at a glance' a work of huge masonry in decay, but upon investigation it has mostly satisfied those who dug that Nature placed those boulders there.

A Big Mill.

South of the ruins and southeast of the foundry a similar distance we find the waters of the Conowingo and those of McFarland's run forming the dam of what is now Mr. E. Stauffer's mill. This mill was built a four-story frame structure by Wm. and Harry Long in 1848, and, after being in operation some time, it was sold to Abraham Groff. At Mr. Groff's death, which occurred about 1875, it was purchased by E. M. Stauffer' to whose widow it now belongs. Eight years ago it was destroyed by fire, and upon the same foundation was reared a new structure' similar to the old one. Two years ago it was re-fitted with the Butler long roller pro-

cess, and continues to do a thriving business under the management of Aldus Groff, for which it has long been noted.

And Sickles, Too.

A stone's throw from the previously mentioned dam, up the McFarland rim, once stood John Long's sickle mill. Mr. Long, with others, manufactured the Drumore sickle, with a combination of good qualities so as to make that brand most desirable. Competition with foreign manufacturers existed at this time, for it is stated that the Drumore sickle was of such a desirable quality and at so reasonable a price that the English blade was almost driven out of the market. They were sold at one time as low as four dollars a dozen; at another as high as ten dollars a dozen. John Long was the last sickle maker in Drumore' he having carried on the business until his death in 1855.

Another Old Mill.

Two and a-half miles down the stream, at a point where the road from Chestnut Level to Fulton House crosses it, a half mile from the latter place, we find the site of the second oldest mill on the stream. This is situated in what is now Fulton township' and marks one of the early settlements within its limits. It was, perhaps, originally owned by the grandfather of the illustrious inventor, Robert Fulton.

William Fulton took up 393 acres on Conowingo Creek, which, by warrant of No. 121,742, was surveyed to James Gillespie (who had married his widow) and to this he added other pieces of land, making a total of 546 acres. On this' in 1751, he erected a corn mill one story and a-half high. The first story was of stone, while the half-story or garret was of frame. In 1764 Gillespie had become involved in debt, and the Sheriff sold his property. That on

the west of the creek, including the mill, to George Ross and John Bickham, and that on the east to Robert Fulton, the elder, who also involved himself by the purchase, and suffered a like fate. It is surmised by some that as Gilespie married the widow of William Fulton, the claims of the heirs of the said Fulton formed a part of the liabilities for which the property was sold, and as Robert Fulton became a purchaser he was one of these heirs. If this were so, it would make William Fulton, settler, the grandfather of Robert Fulton, the inventor. Ross and Bickham, the owners of the mill property, were residents of Lancaster city, the former being George Ross, to whose memory was lately erected a pillar bearing a bronze tablet, at Rossmere, at which dedicatory services our society held its June meeting.

In 1774 these gentlemen sold the property to Jacob Gryder, who added a saw mill, and sold it in 1792 to Martin Gryder, who devised it to Christian and Martin Gryder, and from thence it passed into the hands of Joel Smedley, a practical miller, who, in 1833, rebuilt the old mill and added a sorghum factory. It now belongs to F. C. Pyle, who four years ago refitted it with a fine set of rolls. The sorghum factory and saw mill have passed entirely out of use.

Brown's Mills.

A mile and a-half below the Fulton mills are what were formerly called Brown's mills, now Goshen mills. The original mill was a stone structure, one story high, built in 1758 by Joshua Brown, from Nottingham, Md., who purchased the property of John Denny, who had inherited it from his father, Walter Denny, who had taken up a large tract south of the Gilespie tract about 1741. Joshua Brown was the first of that name to come to this section, which has since become the

home of many of his descendants. He was a minister in the Society of Friends, and made frequent visits to Virginia, North and South Carolina, encouraging those of his sect to stand fast to their Christian testimony against all wars and fightings. During one of these trips, in 1785, he was arrested as a spy in South Carolina and confined in jail for a period of six months, less two days, before the court was convinced of his innocence. Despite this persecution, he continued on his mission, faithful to the dictates of his conscience unto the end. In 1775 the mills were sold to Jeremiah Brown, the oldest son of Joshua Brown. Jeremiah enlarged the mill by a story of bricks and the addition of another pair of burrs, after which he operated it to its utmost capacity. He kept two teams' one engaged in hauling to the mill' the other carting flour to Christiana, Delaware, where it was shipped in sloops and schooners to Philadelphia and other markets. It is said that during the Revolutionary war a very profitable business was done by this mill in sending flour to the British Army. At this period little wheat was raised in the lower end of the county, and these mills were dependent for supplies chiefly on the Pequea Valley of Lancaster county, the Valleys of York and Codorus, York county. Jeremiah Brown' with others, established in 1810 the Farmers, Bank of Lancaster, and at the time of his death, in 1831, he was, perhaps, the largest stockholder, having in his own name one thousand shares. He was the father of Associate Judge Jeremiah Brown of the courts of this county. In 1820, these mills passed into the hands of Slater Brown, the youngest son of Jeremiah, the owner, who proceeded to further improve them by adding another story of frame and a slate roof, in which condition they remained

until destroyed by fire, April 25, 1895. At the death of Slater Brown, in 1855, the property descended to his son Jeremiah' the third, who operated them till 1877, when, after passing through four generations of the Browns, for one hundred and twenty years' they were sold to J. Penrose Ambler, who reconstructed the machinery of the mill in modern designs. After the fire of 1895, Mr. Ambler erected a fine frame mill. The new mill is of the latest improved Butler type. A piece of timber, bearing the date of 1704 rudely cut upon it, was rescued from the flames' and has given rise to doubt in the minds of some whether a mill existed in that place prior to 1758. If such should be the truth, tradition and history are alike silent on the secret.

Southeast of the mill stands a brick house, which was erected by Joshua Brown about 1760, and remains a sound building, occupied by his descendants, Slater Brown, of the fourth generation.

Still Another.

A mile below this, opposite what is now the post-office of Goshen' Jeremiah Brown built a mill in 1818, for chopping feed' sawing lumber, and cleaning clover seed. The clover mill is torn away, as portable machinery has taken its place. The feed and saw mill are still in operation, and now belong to Mr. Day Wood, who is a descendant of Jeremiah Brown.

Oldest of All.

Two miles down the stream and a half mile east of the village of Wakefield is the site of the oldest mill on the stream. The present mill is owned by Amos K. Bradley, and the first story may be a portion of the original. It was known to exist as far back as 1733, when a road was laid out from King's mills to Octorara. This proves an earlier settlement of James King and others, or a road would not have

been needed. He was a Friend' or Quaker. His neighbors were, perhaps, of the same persuasion, and the direction of the road clearly points to the Nottingham settlement of Friends. Mr. Bradley has in his possession papers showing that James King had his land patented June 10, 1742, and a deed for five hundred acres from the proprietors, dated November 14, 1745. In 1756, James King deeded his property among his children, so there might be no dispute after his decease, as an old writing states. The corn mill and 110 acres of land became the property of his son, Thomas, December 12, 1785. It became the property of Michael King by legacy from his father, Thomas. Michael King sold to Vincent King, September 9, 1800, who added a carding machine and saw mill, and then sold it in 1810 to Jeremiah Brown, who gave it to Jacob Kirk and Deborah, his wife (who was J. Brown's daughter), for the consideration of five dollars. In 1846, Jeremiah Kirk bought it from his father, and in 1853 sold it to Isaac Brady, from whom the present owner, A. K. Bradley, bought it in 1881. This is undoubtedly a landmark which we do well to keep in memory, having marked the place of changing grain to meal for more than one hundred and sixty years. Down the stream about a mile the little Conowingo empties into the Conowingo. Some place near the junction of the two streams, there once stood a clover and saw mill, which was built about 1817, and at one time had a feed mill attached, but in later years it was moved to the point where the road leading from Lancaster to Port Deposit crosses the Conowingo, and here continued business until destroyed by fire in 1850.

The Last One.

The last mill on our noble creek is that owned by Mrs. Anna Wood, situated about a mile south of Pleasant

Grove. This mill was built in 1784, consisting of a grist mill and saw mill, probably by a man named Strohm, who was the father of him who was known as Honest John Strohm. In 1804 Strohm sold the mill and some ten acres of land to Levi Brown, who carried on milling and store keeping at that point. In 1865 the mill was rebuilt, a large stone structure of finer proportions and practically calculated for doing a fine trade. The husband of the present owner was a descendant of Levi Brown. This property is a portion of a tract of land taken up by Emanuel Grubb in 1713. Doubtless this spot with its substantial old buildings deserves a more extended and interesting notice, but the author of this sketch can go no further into details for want of information. A quarter of a mile below the mill the Conowingo enters Maryland, and in the course of four or five miles empties into the Susquehanna at a point called Conowingo, and at which place there is a bridge across the river. In the course of the last forty years, we are told, the stream has lost one-fourth of its power. If this be true or not, I can not say, but, like other streams of its kind, less water passes down its channel than formerly, and in the next hundred and sixty years it may not be depended upon as much as **in** those which have gone.

Author: Maxwell, E. Beverly.

Title: Early industries located along the Conowingo Creek / by Mr. E. Beverly Maxwell.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): Industries.
Water mills--Pennsylvania--Lancaster County--History.
Industries--Pennsylvania--Lancaster County--History.
Conowingo Creek (Lancaster County, Pa.)

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society,
1897-98

Description: [53]-63 p. ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 2,
no. 2

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.2

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

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