

Watermark Proves Existence Of Early Ohio Paper Mill

Did the Good Hope Paper Mill of Hocking County ever actually exist? If it did, it would have been one of the first paper mills in Ohio. The late Dard Hunter, of Chillicothe, a world authority on paper and paper-making, had maintained that the only known proof that the mill ever did business was a small advertisement in an 1810 issue of a Chillicothe newspaper. The advertisement proclaimed that Rudolph and Abraham Pitcher of Lancaster "will soon have completed" a paper mill and "will give the highest price for clean linen and cotton rags" necessary in manufacturing paper.

Apart from that advertisement, no historic proof of the mill's operation could be found until recently when the Ohio Historical Society's Archives-Manuscripts Division found the first known examples of Good Hope paper among the records of the Lancaster Lateral Canal Company. It is now apparent that the Pitcher brothers' mill was built and run successfully for almost 40 years. And, though there is still some question regarding whether the Good Hope was the third, fourth or fifth paper mill in the state, there is no longer a question about its existence.

When the Archives-Manuscripts Division first noticed that the Lancaster Lateral Canal Company's pay vouchers were printed on paper bearing the watermark "Greene," a connection was immediately made with Jacob Greene, one of the canal company's major stockholders. Further examination of the canal papers produced an 1827 receipt for the paper purchased from Greene. Greene is the historic link needed to establish a relatively complete history of the manufacturing enterprise.

Rudolph Pitcher, builder of the original mill, died in 1817, and the notice of the sale of his paper-, grist-, and sawmills provides the first substantial evidence that the mill had actually been put into operation. The *Lancaster Eagle* of April 16, 1818, carries an advertisement for two apprentices, boys 12-15 years old, of sober and industrious habits, to work at the Good Hope Paper Mills, but ownership of the mills is not stated.

It appears, however, that the mill was purchased by Joseph A. Greene & Co., a partnership which included Joseph A., Jacob A., and possibly William A. Greene. In 1825, this company was advertising that its Lancaster store carried "a large supply of writing, printing and wrapping paper," and two years later it was advertised that Joseph A. Greene & Co. "will give the highest price for clean linen and cotton rags, in goods, at their store, in Lancaster; where they will con-



The watermark "Greene" on a Lateral Canal Company pay voucher (above) was the link which proved the existence of the Good Hope Paper Mill.

stantly keep on hand a large supply of paper." A similar ad in an 1830 Lancaster paper refers to the establishment as the Pine Grove Paper Mill on Clear Creek.

The *Lancaster Eagle* reported on February 1, 1830, that the Pine Grove Paper Mill had been consumed by fire. The article explained, "It was supposed that the fire was communicated to the upper part of the building through the stove pipe. It was discovered about 8 o'clock in the morning, but unfortunately too late to arrest the progress of the flames. A large quantity of rags was destroyed with the mill. The tools, machinery, and about 300 reams of paper were preserved. The whole loss is estimated, by the proprietors, at \$1500. The next day, with characteristic activity, they began their preparation for a new building, which, it is said, will be finished and in full operation in the course of three or four months."

Apparently the paper molds were among the equipment saved, for the watermarked examples of "Greene" paper preserved among the Lancaster Canal manuscripts date both before and after the 1830 conflagration, and no distinction can be made between watermarks from before and after the fire.

The Greene partnership was dissolved in November 1830, and Jacob Greene continued operating the new mill. Greene watermarks appear on documents dating from 1827 through 1835. Hocking County tax duplicates record Jacob Greene as the owner of a paper mill and a sawmill in Good Hope Township from 1832 to 1846. After 1846, the paper mill is not listed, though Greene may have operated it until his death in November 1850. Jacob's widow, Sarah, still owned the land when she remarried ten years later, though by 1876 the land at the mouth of Clear Creek had passed into the hands of John Arney, who continued the sawmill and grist operation.

Today, no trace remains of any of these milling industries. Passing motorists on busy U.S. 33 scarcely cast a glance at the site of Pine Grove. Buildings and foundation stones have all disappeared, and the only remaining evidence of this pioneer Ohio industrial center is a few scraps of paper.

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