

QUASSAICK CREEK

excerpted from *Ruttenber's 1911 History of the Town of New Windsor*

by Mr. Hazelhurst, for a few years, as a shoddy mill. In 1850, the property was purchased by D. Carson & Co., formerly of the Carson mills in Massachusetts (David and David F. B. Carson and Eratus Ide), and converted into a paper mill, to which use it has since been devoted, with some changes in the proprietorship. It is now owned by James P. Townsend, of Newburgh and is the only prosecuted manufacturing industry in the ancient township of Orangeville.

The hamlet has a post office under the name of Moodna; the school house of district No. 2 is located there, and there are a few dwellings, principally occupied by operatives in the mills. It is not impossible that in the adjustments and readjustments of manufacturing industry which are constantly going on, the now almost neglected hydraulic power of the Moodna will again be utilized.

Quassaick Valley.—The water power of the Quassaick, on the northern boundary of the town, was not employed at a very early period. The first record of its use was by Robert Boyd, Jr., who erected, in June, 1775, a forge for the manufacture of guns, bayonets, etc. He obtained a contract from the revolutionary authorities of the state, by the terms of which he was to receive "three pounds fifteen shillings, New York money, for each good musket with steel ramrod, and bayonet with scabbard." In February, 1776, he was able to write that he had "the best gunsmiths' shop in the colonies," but nevertheless its capacity was limited offered a large premium for gunsmiths to assist him, and empowered its agents in Europe to secure workmen.** The first regiments organized from the difficulty in obtaining workmen.* The provincial convention in the state were mainly armed with muskets of his manufacture. At what time Boyd relinquished the business has not been ascertained, but sometime about 1800 he converted the works into a plaster mill. The next change was in 1808, when George Parker and Abner Armstrong advertised that they had "erected machines for breaking and carding wool at the plaster mill of Robert Boyd, on the road leading from New Windsor to Newburgh,*** one mile from each place." The property was sold by Samuel Boyd to George Reid who converted it to a paper mill. From the Reid estate it passed to John Barker, who manufactured hats. Barker sold to Benj. Carpenter, at which time it was operated by John H. Waters who manufactured woolen goods. Carpenter sold to George

* Hist. Newburgh, 281.

** Proceedings, Prov. Conv.

***The road referred to has been discontinued for a number of years. It was part of the old "King's Highway."

Crawshaw, Crawshaw to Wm. H. Beede ; Beede to Edward Haigh by whom it was operated under the title of the Valley Woolen Mills.

The second privilege (long known as Schultz's mill) was occupied by Governor George Clinton who erected a grist mill and a saw-mill. He sold to Hugh Walsh in 1790. Walsh, July 5th of that year, conveyed to Isaac Schultz thirty-two acres extending west from Hudson's River to lands of Robert Boyd, including the undivided half part of "grist mill stream of water" and land under water on the Hudson.** The mill stood a short distance west of the Hudson on the east side of the old highway. In 1794 (July 6) Schultz sold to Daniel Byrnes the lot on the east including one-half of the mill building, the division line being "the middle of the post next west of the north door of said mill," including one-half of the flume, etc., and two mills were thereafter run under one roof, the proprietors being particular to say "their separate mills" in their advertisements. Isaac Schultz continued his mill until his death in 1802, when it came into the possession of his brother Jacob, who sold it to Peter Townsend. The Byrnes mill and property attached passed from Dinah Byrnes, widow of Daniel Byrnes, to Caleb Byrnes, March 12, 1799. The assignees of Caleb Byrnes sold to Richard Winble in 1801, and it was continued by him for some years. Winble sold to Elisha Hale in 1835, and Elisha Hale to Philip A. Verplanck in 1837. Verplanck closed the race-way and suffered the mill to decay on its foundations.

The third privilege was occupied by Hugh Walsh who retained one-half of the mill stream and the remainder of the Clinton farm not conveyed to Schultz, and who, in company with John Craig, erected in 1792, the paper mill afterward owned by his son, John H. Walsh, and now by his grandson, J. DeWitt Walsh. This mill is still in successful operation and is situated at the extreme west end of the valley.

The fourth privilege was that embraced in the purchase from Jacob Schultz by Peter Townsend and was known as the cannon foundry. This foundry was erected in 1816 on a site immediately west of the Schultz mill, and consisted of two furnaces and four boring mills.**

*The deed recites the former purchase of one hundred acres from Nathan Smith by Robert Boyd and George Harris, of which this was a part. The remainder of the original purchase included the subsequent mill and residence of Boyd, the latter now the property late of Mrs. Charles H. Havemeyer.

**During the Summer past, Mr. Peter Townsend has been engaged in building a cannon foundry on Chambers' Creek, just below the village. It is now in complete operation. On Wednesday last the casting of cannon was commenced.—Index, Dec. 3, 1816.

Referring to a trial of cannon cast by Mr. Townsend, the National Intelligencer of July 17, 1817, remarks: "The first cannon ever manufactured in the State of New York, and of metal and accuracy of firing were never excelled."

The enterprise was not a financial success, however, and the property passed into the possession of the U. S. Government and subsequently to John A. Tompkins about 1836, who converted it into a machine shop. Mr. Tompkins was accidentally drowned in December, 1838, and the property came into the possession of Charles Ludlow and Christopher B. Miller, from whom it passed to Mr. Sterritt, who converted it into a pin factory. This business also failed, and Joseph Longking and Aaron F. Palmer took it for the manufacture of daguerrean instruments, cases, etc., but with no better success. The last occupant was John Gray who converted it into a flour mill. While being occupied by him it was destroyed by fire. Those who remember the activity which at one time prevailed there can best appreciate the desolation that now sits with folded wings on its ruins.

West of the old Boyd mill, George Reid established a paper mill—date not ascertained. Reid died in 1837 or '38, and from his executors the property passed to John H. Walsh & Sons ; from them to Samuel A. Walsh ; from him to Charles H. Havemeyer ; from Havemeyer's executors to Mrs. Havemeyer, and from her to Edward Haigh. This property is now the Windsor Woolen Mills, and is next east of the high bridge on Quassaick Avenue.

The last of the milling enterprises is on a site sold by John H. Walsh to Alexander Marshall ; Marshall to Darlington ; Darlington to Isaac K. Oakley ; Oakley to Adams & Bishop. This mill has been for several years engaged in the manufacture of paper.

It may not be improper to add that on the north side of the creek (Newburgh) and near its confluence with the Hudson, Richard Wimble erected a flouring mill, in the early part of the century. He also obtained a grant of the land under water (July 30, 1811) and constructed a dock and a large cooper shop ; the remains of the former are visible on the point east of the bridge. The property was purchased by Elisha Hale in 1835, and a manufacture of pumps conducted. From Hale the property passed through several parties to Homer Ramsdell, who sold to the Pennsylvania Coal Company. The mill was destroyed by fire during Mr. Ramsdell's ownership. The creek at this point was a navigable stream for small vessels and the bridge of the Newburgh and New Windsor Turnpike Company was constructed as a draw-bridge for their accommodation. West of the Trimble mill was the plot celebrated for many years under the name of "The Vale," while part of the Trimble house was shrined in tradition as the scene of the attempted betrayal of Washington to the British by one Colonel Ettrick, for which reason the place was sometimes called Ellrick Grove.*

*Hist. Newburgh, 214.