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ROCK HILL, S. C.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE PAPERS

#14

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Submitted by:

Mr. C. L. Cobb, Sr.

Anderson, S. C.,

March 20, 1952.

Dear Charlie:

Yours 19th.

It has been my understanding that the old Rock Hill Cotton Mill was owned by Capt. Hutchison, altho some of his family probably had an interest.

I would suggest that you have some one to go through the files of the old Rock Hill Herald and The Record, if they are available, to get "on the spot" information. This applies not only to the mills and other industries, but to the attempt to grow tobacco, when Groom was brought in from North Carolina as consultant, tobacco barns were built on various farms, etc. Also as to members of the school board, the organization and growth of the buggy factory, the purchase of the "Marion Jones" fire engine, the erection of the electric light plant, etc. My suggestion would be for several to be on that job at one time, looking for things of interest and noting the dates, so that some one or two persons could then decide what ones to use.

My father had the electric light plant installed, and I was present when the switch was thrown to turn on the lights for the first time. That was quite a "New Era" in the history of the town, and it took place within a very few years after Edison had developed the light bulb. That was fully covered by The Herald at the time. My impression is that the light plant was owned by J. M. Cherry, W. B. Wilson and others.

Don't overlook the oil mill that was operated under Peterkin, where the Catawba Lumber Co. is now. Up to that time, cotton seed was considered almost worthless and frequently gins were located near a creek or river, so that the seed could be disposed of readily. Cotton seed were some times boiled and fed to cows, and even after the seed were used to produce oil, the hulls were used as fuel for the boilers that operated the mill.

You will also, no doubt, remember the mill-work plant operated by L. L. Clyburn, just about where Patterson's wholesale business is just now. That was at one time quite an enterprise. Julian Starr operated a turning lathe there and was quite adept at it. My recollection is that the plant was destroyed by fire and that Clyburn returned to Kershaw, from where he came.

✓ Of course, you will have the Rock Hill Buggy Co. well written up. I went to work there as substitute stenographer, to fill in while first Jessie Fewell and then Mamie Steel went on vacation, then became shipping-clerk, later superintendent and then manager. I was superintendent when I was 24 years old and manager when I was 26. The last two years, when I was manager, we shipped 7,000 buggies a year. That was one of the really big enterprises of the state at that time and helped materially in

putting Rock Hill on the map. Of course, you remember that it was made possible by selling stock on the installment plan to about seventy-five stock-holders, who were afterwards frozen out by Cherry and Anderson. Miss Mary White was the last one to dispose of her stock, and my recollection is that she did not sell until after I left there.

I will try to put into words my recollection of the organization and operation, not only of the cotton mills but other enterprises and businesses, and send to you shortly; but I believe that perusal of the newspaper files will prove to be a gold-mine for that purpose.

Can you locate the names of people who formerly lived in Rock Hill in the records that were compiled for the last celebration, some fifteen or twenty years ago, or were they all lost in the passage of time?

Now, to change the subject. Did it ever occur to you that the form of government of the city was changed by the voters without their ever voting on the question? I was chairman of the commission government committee of city council, having been appointed by Charlie Spenser, Mayor at the time. Eugene Hutchison was a member of the legislature, and the Chamber of Commerce had him to introduce a bill for that purpose, but I went down to Columbia, found that he had taken the Sumter bill, substituted the name Rock Hill for that of Sumter and introduced a bill that way. It was absurd, as it did not apply to Rock Hill at all, things being mentioned in that bill that did not apply to Rock Hill at all. I got Eugene to let me have his bill, went back home and, with the help of Charlie Chreitzberg, wrote a completely new bill, using information I had been collecting on the subject for some months. The question submitted to the voters was not whether or not the form of government was to be changed, but which form of commission government, the straight commission or the commission-manager form. The latter form got a decided majority, but the council floundered around for some time, holding on to the old form of operation, the city manager being just a messenger-boy, until I called a public meeting to investigate the affair. This proved a fiasco, because of a determined and successful effort to suppress the facts and a misunderstanding of my purpose; but the result was that Goodman, whom I recommended, was elected. I told him, before he accepted, to do so only on condition that he be the real city-manager, in accordance with the law creating the office. You, of course, know that he made a splendid record, which has not since been equalled, simply because these elected to success him did not have the right perspective.

In that connection, I have been disappointed, on my recent trips to Rock Hill, to note that there has not been the progress there, in the way of street paving, etc., that has been made, in Anderson, for instance. Just take a look at Jones Avenue, Chatham and Ebenezer Avenues, the old "Crawford Pike", etc. if you want to see what I mean. I know that "comparisons are odious", but here in Anderson, every street and even the alleys are paved, and Anderson County is the best paved county in the state.

I suggested to some one that Charlie Chreitzberg would be a first-class man to look over the newspaper files, but I went to see him after I saw you, and I found that he was confined to the house with "flu", altho I got to talk with him a few minutes. I found that he is employed as auditor at the Bleachery, which would probably not afford him the time, but also that his mind is not as active as it was when we worked together on various matters in the past.

You probably recall that it was as a result of a citizens meeting that I called in connection with the old high-school matter that the method of electing school trustees was changed. J. M. Charrey, with whom I worked at the buggy company and for whom I had high regard, with W. B. Wilson and A. E. Smith, was on one side of the question, while W. L. Roddey, J. J. Waters and another trustee, whose name I do not just now recall, were on the other, dead-locked because of the death of Iredell Jones, regarding the sale of the high-school property to Winthrop College. I let the opposition get the jump on me by appointing W. J. Cherry as chairman. I moved that an investigating committee be appointed and that when we adjourned, it be to meet again to hear the report of the committee and take such action as we saw fit. W. B. Wilson took the position that we had no authority, and on my insistence that we did, the meeting was suspended until a law book could be secured, when W. J. Cherry ruled that the motion was in order. W. J. Cherry "loaded" the committee against me but did appoint T. L. Johnston as chairman, and Mr. Johnston called on me to make the investigation. When we met again, two weeks later, Jas. White denounced me and my connection with the investigation, claimed to have the previous night gone over the books of the school board and found certain things to be the case. I demanded the floor on a point-of-personal privilege and challenged Jas. to produce a single book of record of the district, and Mr. Johnston stated that I had made the investigation upon his authority as chairman and that he stood by the report, also denounced Jas. White, a thing that T. L. didn't often do.

Excuse this long letter, but I just got started and could not stop, but in that connection, let me say that there was ~~from time~~ at least one Creighton in the local schools from the days of old Pinopolis up to the time John Roddey had me enjoined from serving on the board, his real purpose being to have me put off of the council to save the jobs of Partlow and Charlie Miller, whose scalps I was after, for good cause.

It is my beleif that my father and I did as much for the advance ment of Rock Hill as any two men who ever lived there, and we did not do it for personal or political advantage, but simply for the satisfaction of getting done what we believed should be done.

Sincerely,

J. M. Charrey

Anderson, S. C.,
March 25, 1952.

Mr. Paul Workman,
Rock Hill, S. C.

Dear Paul:

I have just come across a diploma, dated June 9, 1893, which is signed by Iredell Jones, chairman, A. E. Smith, J. M. Cherry, J. C. Sharpe, W. L. Roddey, W. B. Wilson, Jr. (father of the present W. B. Wilson, Jr.) and W. S. Creighton. I am under the impression, however, that Rev. J. S. White was a member of the original board and that J. M. Cherry was chosen to succeed him. I am not positive about that, but files of The Herald just before the above date would show that, or at the time of the death of Rev. J. S. White.

In looking over a list of the members of the ^{above} ~~first~~ board and of the first board elected under the new law, I was struck by the similarity of the first letters in the names of these boards, as you will see from the following:

Old Board:

Cherry
Creighton
Jones
Sharpe
Wilson
Roddey
Smith

New Board:

Chewitzberg
Creighton
Johnston
Sandifer
Waters
Roddey Miller
Pressley (or Pressly)

J. J. Waters was the only member of the old board at the time the method of electing the members was changed, who favored the change, he was the only one elected to the new board and was elected chairman, being succeeded by Roddey Miller, I think. I was the only member of the ~~original board~~ the new board who was a son of a member of the first board, but Roddey Miller was a nephew, I believe, of W. L. Roddey.

In that connection, a peculiar fact is that for thirty years there was at least one Creighton, and some times as many as five, in the Rock Hill schools, but there isn't one in York County, at this time.

"People are funny", and so are facts.

Yours truly,

J. B. Creighton.

A Partial List of the old firms in Rock Hill: About 1895

R. T. Fewell & Co., Clothing

Reid & Wroton, Furniture

New York Racket, S. C. True, Manager

J. B. Johnson & Co. Drugs, General Agent & Retail

A. Friedheim & Bro., General Merchandise

A. E. Smith & Co. "

August Friedheim, General Merchandise

George Beach, Jeweler

S. T. Frew & Co., General Merchandise

Myron H. Sandifer, as Sandifer Drug Co.

F. E. Brodie, Jeweler

Blum's, or White Front Grocery.

John Mallard, Meats

A. J. Evans, Garden Seed, lamps, stationery, etc.
located at Rock Hill Pharmacy

O'Neal's, General Merchandise

C. W. Frew, Clothier

Hagins & Cox

Roddey Mercantile Co., General Merchandise

Erwin & Procter, Mantua Makers

Kerr & Peacock, Poultry

— Rock Hill Hardware Company

L. L. Clyburn Sash & Door Co.

A. H. White, Breeder

J. H. Milling, Groceries

J. E. Massey, Physician

Dr. I. Simpson & Son, Dentists

J. R. Fairley, Attorney

Dr. W. A. Pressley, Dentist

W. B. Wilson, Attorney

Louis Sherfesees, Agent, Equitable Fire Ins. Co. of Charleston

First National Bank

The Savings Bank of Rock Hill

The Manchester Mill

Mr. W. J. Cherry in his Hand-Book of the City of Rock Hill published in 1895 termed the establishment of The Manchester Mill "the achievement of a plucky man with brains in his head, J. R. Barron's handsome tribute to a live city."

The Manchester was constructed in 1895 and was ready for operation in the Spring of 1896. It was a three-story building of handsome design. The capital invested was \$125,000, and it began with 7,000 spindles and 200 looms. It consumed between 1,800 and 2,000 bales of cotton yearly, employed around 200 hands and the weekly payroll was between \$750 and \$1,000. The products were yarns and white goods.

The original Board of Directors were: J. R. Barron, W. L. Roddey, J. Friedheim, J. B. Johnson, W. J. Roddey, R. L. Campbell, of Clover, S. C., E. Milheiser of Richmond, Va., and Robert H. Wylie of New York. J. R. Barron was President and Treasurer. Later, T. L. Johnston was elected Vice President. The ^{original} Mill village was constructed about the same time. Some of the two-story house, built of Georgia heart pine without a knot in it, were constructed for \$300. and they stand today in good repair.

In early 1900 The Manchester was sold to Virginia interests and the name was changed to the Blue Buckle Cotton Mills, one of the largest manufacturers of denims in the South, the output of was was absorbed by the Blue Buckle Overall Company of Lynchburg, Va.

The Blue Buckle Cotton Mills confronted financial difficulties in the 20's and was reorganized under the name of Industrial Cotton Mills, which in later years also had financial reverses when a reorganization took place under the same name. Mr. Alex Long was President of this Mill and in later years was succeeded by Mr. L. D. Pitts.

This Mill was purchased by J. P. Stevens & Company, and is operated as the Industrial Cotton Mills Division of that Company.

What is now known as the Aragon Cotton Mills Division of J. P. Stevens & Company was established in 1905-06 with Mr. Alexander Long as its first President.

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The Arcade Cotton Mill was established in 1895-96, with Mr. R. T. Fewell as the leading spirit in its organization. It was known as the "Fewell Mill." The authorized capital of this mill was \$200,000. The factory building was two stories and originally employed around 200 hands for 6,500 spindles and 180 looms. It was estimated that it would consume from 1,800 to 2,000 bales of cotton per annum in the manufacture of gray goods of the kind used for converters. These goods were shipped to the Northern markets where there was a good demand for them. The Board of Directors were: R. T. Fewell, J. M. Cherry, T. L. Johnston, W. J. Roddey, W. J. Rawlinton, T. A. Crawford, Julius Friedheim, with R. T. Fewell as President and Treasurer.

The Arcade has operated successfully since the date its spindles and looms started.

Then came the Wymojo Cotton Mills. The principal organizers of this factory were Dr. W. Gill Wylie, of New York, Webb W. Moore and Dr. J. B. Johnson, of Rock Hill. Hence its name from the first two letters of each surname. In later years the Wymojo was purchased by Textiles, Inc. which company owned a chain of cotton mills in North Carolina. Ralph Armstrong managed

the plant for Textiles. Due to market conditions this mill was idle for sometime, and was purchased by Samarkand Rugs, Inc., of New York and Philadelphia, manufacturing cotton rugs for nation-wide distribution.

The Helen Mill was a subsidiary of Textiles, Inc. and this small plant was abandoned and stayed idle for several years. The building and real estate were bought by a group of citizens under the corporate name of the Rock Hill Yarn Mill Building Company which renovated the building under lease to Samarkand Rugs, Inc. with an option to buy. Samarkand exercised its option and acquired the property and made extensive improvements to the building. Samarkand Rugs consumed the output of the Yarn Mill.

In ~~1946~~ another group of citizens acquired a site on N. Trade and built a hosiery mill building and leased it to a Reading, Pa. Hosiery manufacturer. In later years this plant was acquired by Jac Feinberg & Sons, of New York, who abandoned the plant following a strike of its employees. The Jac Feinberg property was purchased by the Rock Hill Investment Company which company has recently leased the property to the National Container Corporation, maker of pasteboard boxes. The Container Corporation has similar plants and pulp mills in various sections of the United States.

The Liberty Hosiery Mill was the first knitting mill in Rock Hill that we have recollection of. It discontinued business in the 1920's.

The Harris Cotton Mill, on W. Main Street, was bought by the Victoria Cotton Mills, and was known as Victoria No. 2. Later the building was purchased by Mr. J. C. Hardin and has been used since as the home of the Rock Hill Body ~~Services~~ Company. This Company makes truck and bus bodies for companies and schools districts within and beyond the State of South Carolina.

In 1946 a group of citizens organized the Rock Hill Revolving Fund, Inc., under the leadership of A. W. Huckle and Ben F. Kurtz with around 100 stockholders who paid in \$600 each to provide a fund to be used as an inducement to keep in Rock Hill small industries and procure more industries for this community. Lance, Inc. of Charlotte, N. C., needed a building in which to manufacture its product and a building was erected for this company on York Avenue under lease. The plant operated successfully but the management decided that it would be to Lance's interest to move the Rock Hill business to the Charlotte plant which had been considerably enlarged. The Dave Baer Hosiery Mill is now successfully operating in this space under a long term lease between Mr. Baer and the Rock Hill Revolving Fund, Inc. A. W. Huckle is President of the Revolving Fund and C. L. Cobb is Secretary-Treasurer.

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In 1893 a movement was started in this locality to produce tobacco which resulted in the establishment of the Piedmont Tobacco Works located on West White Street, just across the street from Rock Hill's first cotton factory. The factory was chartered in 1895 with a capital stock of \$40,000 and was engaged exclusively in the manufacture of plug and twist tobacco, turning out several grades. It consumed 230,000 pounds of tobacco annually with an estimated dollar volume of \$30,000 a year. It employed 100 hands and its weekly payroll was \$300.00. It employed both skilled and unskilled labor, bringing about a difference in the wages paid. Expert rollers were paid from \$10 to \$15.00 a week.

Mr. Philip Taylor, an experienced tobacconist, formerly of North Carolina, was President. Its Board of Directors

was made up of Philip Taylor, Dr. T. A. Crawford, John R. London, W. J. Roddey, J. B. Johnson, D. Hutchison and Frel Mobley. A fire came along and entirely destroyed the Piedmont Tobacco Works which did not resume operations.

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The Rock Hill Fertilizer Company was established by R. T. Fewell and associates and built a fertilizer plant in Ebenezer Township, just west of the York County Fairgrounds. This business was operated successfully until it was disposed of to the Virginia-Carolina Chemical Company. The plant is not operating today.

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The L. L. Clyburn Door, Sash & Blind Factory was a large, three-story frame building situated on Chatham Avenue between W. White Street and W. Main. L. L. Clyburn invested \$20,000 in this business and was its sole owner. Around 25 people were employed, with a weekly payroll of \$100.00. The factory also contracted to build houses. It did a thriving business for several years but was leveled by fire and did not rebuild and resume operations.

The Rock Hill Cotton Oil Company was in operation before 1895. It was located on W. Main to the rear of the Rock Hill Cotton Factory. Fire destroyed this business but its success when in operation induced the building of another cotton seed oil mill in 1896. This was the Highland Park Manufacturing Co.'s plant known as the Highland Park Oil Mill. It was about the only mill in this section of its kind making the highest grade cotton seed meal. This business was discontinued in the 1920's and the building is now occupied by Cornwell & Company operating a large cotton ginnery and farm supplies and storage business.

The Sylecau Manufacturing Company was a lumber and building supply business which operated a plant on what is now known as Lee Street, off of W. Main. This plant was organized by J. B. Sykes, J. C. Cauthen and W. S. Lee. Mr. Lee at that time was President of the Southern Power Company which afterwards became the Duke Power Company. The Rock Hill Lumber Company was organized by J. C. Cauthen and succeeded the Sylecau Manufacturing Company.

The Catawba Lumber Co., Pusley, Todd and City Lumber Companies, Ross Builders Supply have had their part in Rock Hill's building program. There are two chemical plants in Rock Hill. One is the

Warwick Chemical Co., Division Sun Chemical Corporation, on East White Street which was established in February, 1938. It occupies through purchase the old Bagging Mill of the Highland Park Mfg. Co. The Warwick sold its business to Sun Chemical Corp. in 1946. Eleven employees are required to operate this plant, some of them having been with Warwick since the day it opened.

The other is Interchemical Corporation, Textile Colors Division, located on Lee Street. Two houses were moved to make room for this plant in about 1940, and it was known^{first} as the Aridye Corporation, a subsidiary of Interchemical.

There were other businesses operated in Rock Hill in years gone by, worthy of mention but which space does not permit a brief history.

The Jones Iron Works on W. White Street

Before 1895 the Egypt Canning Company was established which canned vegetables and fruits, and its products were of high quality.

Flour Mills, tile and brick factories, saddle & harness manufacture establishments flourished in Rock Hill for a time.

The Rock Hill Buggy Company was chartered in 1886 with a capital stock of \$75,000. It employed around 65 men, and sold fine vehicles all through the South and West, employing the latest improved machinery. Its plant covered four acres. It was one of early Rock Hill's biggest industries. The Directors were: A. R. Smith, J. M. Cherry, D. Hutchison, A. D. Holler, Sam Friedheim, W. J. Roddey, T. A. Crawford, Fred Mobley and John G. Anderson. The officers were: A. R. Smith, President, D. Hutchison, Vice President, and J. M. Cherry, Treasurer. Mr. John G. Anderson was Manager.

This industry developed into the Anderson Motor Company which manufactured automobiles into the early 1920's, known as the Anderson Automobile.

The site of this plant was the nucleus of the present site of the Rock Hill Printing & Finishing Company which acquired the property in 1927.

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Farmac Mills, Inc. occupied the property of Hamilton Carhartt Mills No. 2. Mr. Carhartt built a mill village on the hill adjoining the plant to resemble an English Cottage, and it was picturesque in his day.

The Celanese Corporation of America purchased the Carhartt plantation which formed the greater part of land acquired by them for Celriver's site. At one time the Southern Railroad Station was known as Carhartt, S. C., but was later changed to Red River when Carhartt Mill No. 2 became known as Red River Cotton Mills, owned by Yorke Wilson and C. P. Simpson. The Southern renamed the station to Celriver, S. C., after the Celriver Plant of the Celanese Corp. of America, which built its gigantic plant at this place, in 1946.

STANDARD COTTON MILL
GLOBE COTTON MILL

January 4, 1895

The stockholders of the Standard Mill received a very acceptable New Year's present at a recent meeting of the Board of Directors. A semi-annual dividend of 5% was declared payable January 1st, 1895. The Standard is in splendid shape and is perhaps the best mill property in this part of the State. It employs now from 275 to 300 hands and has a weekly payroll of about \$1,000.

Since its establishment seven years ago, the Standard has paid in dividends nearly the amount of the original stock.

The Directors contemplate adding a spindle mill to be capitalized at about \$100,000.

The 320 looms for the Globe Mill have all been placed in position and the dye house and all the appurtenances are in shape for the commencement of work which President London says will be at an early date.

The Standard and Globe cotton mills were established by Major John R. London, who came to Rock Hill from Pittsboro, N. C., prior to 1875. Of this I am sure, as he and my father were associated in the operation of four farms on and near the lower York road, three of which were owned individually and one jointly, before I was born, in 1878. They operated, in addition to the farm, a ginnery, saw-mill and threshing outfit. That was then a prosperous section, but in order to obtain better school facilities and for other reasons, the different families moved out to town, or the owners died and the children moved away, leaving the farming largely to tenants.

Major London was one of those fine citizens that managed to have some gold when the war ended, and he used it wisely and with both vision and integrity. He established an insurance business in Rock Hill, and two of the companies he represented were the Standard and the Globe, both of these being English companies, according to my recollection. With the help of other local citizens and northern capital, he established two cotton mills and named them the Standard and the Globe, both mills making gingham, which was then a cloth very widely used and readily saleable. For some time, the mills were profitable and furnished badly needed employment, but one of those changes in fashion that so often plague the cloth industry resulted in a slump in the cotton mill business. Both Major London and the selling agents thought that the reduced demand was only temporary, the result being that the mills continued to run, storing the cloth in warehouses at the mill and in New York, money being advanced by the selling agents and by banks. When the conditions were at their worst and a change for ~~the~~ more profitable operation of the mills was "just around the corner", an adverse report as to the condition of the mills was made by an employee, and this resulted in the closing of the mills.

Major London was able to save the Globe, which was later acquired by the Roddey interests and operated as the Victoria. The Standard plant, including the village, was bought by the Highland Park Mills of Charlotte for \$45,000, and to show that only a little time would have saved these mills established by Major London, the new owners cleared more than the price they paid, in the first year of operation. E. H. Johnston came to Rock Hill from Cabarrus county, N. C., to manage the mill very successfully. He was one of the few men who at that time saw the possibilities in the cattle business, and the mill bought a registered Hereford bull and kept him at the oil mill, which he had persuaded the Highland Park people to establish. That oil mill was sold, after the death of E. H. Johnston, to the Stephens interests, of Kershaw.

Incidentally, Major Lindon and Major Robertson of Columbia once owned the land around Catawba Falls, now Great Falls, and he tried for several years to interest northern capital in the establishment of a power plant there, but he was just "born too soon" and failed to get the necessary financial help. He and Major Robertson later sold the land, and it was acquired by the Duke interests.

He and my father, W. S. Creighton, were associated very closely for many years, and both should have been millionaires, as they were pioneers and provided service and industry badly needed at that crucial time in the history of the South. Both of them rendered valuable service to the community, not only for possible profit but with the idea of benefiting their fellow men. Neither of them sought the lime-light, but they worked together harmoniously for many years and with the utmost confidence in each other.

Very few people in Rock Hill now know much about the work of these two men, but such is life.

Major London and my father were associated at different time as Creighton & London; Creighton, Sherfesse & Co.; and as Rock Hill Machine Works. As Creighton & London, they sold all kinds of farm machinery, such as engines, boilers, saw-mills, cotton-gins, ~~threshers~~ mowers and threshers, not only in the immediate territory but as far away as Darlington, Marion and Colleton counties. My father took me with him two or three times, to help drive, as he traveled by "private inconvenience" through the country. We would drive to Camden the first day and then to Darlington the next day. From there he would "work" Marion and other towns and communities. Tiring of the constant traveling and being away from his family, my father got into business in Rock Hill, still with Major London. They operated a furniture store in the building where the Merritt Shoe Co. is now and sold not only furniture, coffins and caskets, but buggies, wagons, sewing machines, farm machinery, organs and stoves. In addition to that, there was a black-smith shop, foundry and machine shop and wood-working plant in a fenced inclosure at the rear, extending to Black street. Then, on the other side of Black street, there was a two-story warehouse, in which buggies, wagons, shafts, etc., were stored.

The four Creighton boys helped in the store, shop and foundry. by trimming coffins, filling gin-brushes, firing the boiler, running the different machines as they got older, helping in the foundry, in shoeing horses, cleaning castings, etc., and as book-keeper. Capt. J. W. Marshall was one of our customers and for years he would laugh about seeing me, "just about as big as a hop-toad" sitting on a stool, keeping books. Those were great days, and we had ample opportunity to learn how to do many things, as well as to play.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GOLD-TEX FABRICS CORPORATION

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA

This cotton mill which is presently known as Gold-Tex Fabrics Corporation, Rock Hill, South Carolina, was originally incorporated in the year 1880 as The Rock Hill Cotton Factory and began operations in 1881. The original capital stock was \$100,000 divided into shares of \$100.00 par value each. At the time of construction the mill was described as a large and attractive two-story brick structure conveniently located near the intersection of the Southern Railway and the Ohio and Charleston Railroad with sidetrack connections to each of those railroads for the purpose of receiving and delivering freight. The product of this mill consisted exclusively of cotton yarns during the operation from 1881 to 1894 when the Directors decided to put in looms. In 1895 the equipment consisted of 8,000 spinning spindles and 200 looms. The value of the plant at that time was given as \$175,000.00. At that time the mill consumed approximately 2,500 bales of cotton per year and its products were listed as cotton yarns and white goods principally sheeting, shirting, and drills. The employment at that time was 175 operators and the mill's weekly payroll was about \$625.00.

In those days it was customary for a mill to operate one shift day time only. That one shift however consisted of about 60 to 66 hours per week during those early years of operation in the South. It is stated that the products of this mill found a ready market for sale in the North. The stockholders received annual dividends of 7% on their investment and the mill was kept in regular running operation. The first Board of Directors were A. E. Hutchison, A. H. White, W. L. Roddey, J. R. London, W. B. Fewell, F. J. Pelzer of Charleston, and John Gill of Baltimore.

The officers were A. E. Hutchison, President: D. Hutchison, Secretary.

This mill is reputed to have been the first steam driven cotton mill to have been built and operated in the State of South Carolina. The credit for the inception of cotton manufacturing in this section and the idea of promoting this first Rock Hill Cotton Mill goes to Mr. J. M. Ivey of Rock Hill, South Carolina, who was a Cotton Merchant and a progressive, civic-minded citizen of his day. Another interested stockholder in the beginning was Mr. Hiram Hutchison, a Banker of Cheraw and Hamburg, South Carolina, and associated with one of the banks in New York City. Mr. Hutchison was a large stockholder in the Graniteville Mills at Graniteville, South Carolina, where that mill under the direction of Mr. W. H. Gregg, a native of New England, had built and was operating most successfully one of the earliest mills in the State. The construction of the Rock Hill Cotton Factory was directed by Capt. A. D. Holler, of Rock Hill, and outstanding contractor at that time whose descendants are prominently identified with the progress of Rock Hill. Mr. A. E. Hutchison was the largest stockholder and served as President at a salary of \$100.00 per month. This mill was known as the Old Mill to identify it from subsequent mills which were organized and built and operated in Rock Hill. It was further identified by the big steam whistle which regulated the time and program for many people in this territory. It is said that during the earthquake of 1896 this whistle was blown long and loud to the utter distress and confusion of many negroes who interpreted it as being Gabriel's trumpet sounding the end of the world.

Another product that has been made and identified with this mill since its beginning and up until a few years ago was

the manufacture of cotton rope. This product was widely used for plow lines, sash cord, tent and awning rope and clothes lines all of which created a demand in those years.

About 1898 this mill was reorganized and operated as Belvedere Mills. Mr. W. C. Hutchison, a son of the original President, assumed the Presidency under this reorganization and had associated with him Mr. R. L. Kerr, Capt. A. E. Smith, David Hutchison, Major A. H. White and Joe Neisler, Superintendent. Mr. Neisler was paid the munificent sum of \$50.00 per month for his efforts.

Sometime between the years of 1900 and 1905 the mill was again reorganized and the name changed to Crescent Cotton Mills.

About 1905 the mill was bought by Hamilton Carhartt of Detroit, Michigan, a large and prominent manufacturer of overalls throughout the United States. Mr. Carhartt added dyeing to the equipment and began manufacturing denim for overalls about 1909. During the ownership by Mr. Carhartt a three-story addition was made to the mill and cuttin machines, sewing machines and other equipment was installed for the manufacture of overalls. This operation continued until the depression of 1921 closed the mill.

During the operation of the mill under the ownership of Hamilton Carhartt the present office which had been used as a residence was occupied and used as the office for the mill. This building is still used for the same purpose.

After the close down and sale of the property by Hamilton Carhartt the mill was reorganized as The Cutter Manufacturing Company, with Mr. J. H. Cutter, of Charlotte, North Carolina, as the active head and owner of the manufacturing operations. This took place about 1925.

The mill continued to operate as The Cutter Manufacturing Company and manufactured denims, cotton ades, hickory stripes, ticking, pin check stripes and a variety of materials for work clothing. This operation continued until September 1946 when the entire property was bought by Mr. M. C. Goldberg, of Philadelphia, Pa., who continue to own the property. The mill has been operating since that time as Gold-Tex Fabrics Corporation, Mill Division. Mr. Erich F. A. Paul assumed the position as Vice President and General Manager at the time of purchase in September 1946 and operated the mill in Rock Hill as Resident Manager until May 1948 when he was succeeded by Mr. William Thomas as Resident Manager in order to permit Mr. Paul to return to his residence in Philadelphia as Vice President.

Mr. Robert A. Morgan, the present General Manager, succeeded Mr. Thomas in February 1949 and is the present Manager of the mill. Other members in the supervisory staff are Mr. O. T. Harrington, Office Manager; Mr. John D. Rollins, Superintendent; Mr. Charles Sparks, Night Superintendent; Mr. L. M. Allison, Plant Engineer; with capable overseers, second hands, and office assistants.

Several prominent mill men are reported to have obtained their start in the textile business at this mill. Among them are Mr. Webb Moore who after serving with this mill became an outstanding executive at the Dan River Mills, Danville, Va. Another was Mr. Charles Neisler who after having served an apprenticeship in this mill moved to Kings Mountain, N. C., and established a mill of his own where he has been quite successful and prominent. Another was Mr. J. A. Shinn who after having gotten his early training in this mill moved to Sylacauga, Alabama, where he became associated with the Comer family in the

operation of Avondale Mills in which capacity Mr. Shinn rose to one of the highest positions in the executive authority.

The history of the Gold-Tex Fabrics Corporation with its background extending over 70 years is typical of many other cotton mills throughout the South which were organized largely by local citizens anxious to give employment to worthy operatives and desiring to promote industry for the welfare of the section. To these pioneers who had the vision and the determination and the power to overcome difficulties inherent with their undertaking goes the praise of those who have succeeded in their wake.

The present ownership and management of Gold-Tex Fabrics Corporation is in the midst of a modernization program which when completed will represent a large investment in money, materials, buildings, equipment and operation know how with the result that every assurance is given to the continued successful operation of this worthwhile industry in our midst.

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA

August 26th, 1884.

General Merchandise

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W. L. Roddey & Co.
Ivy and Fewell
Jones and Robertson
A. Friedheim & Bros.
J. R. Allen & Co.
A. E. Smith
Frew Brothers
B. N. Craig & Co.
J. P. Caston

Family Groceries

and

Confectioneries

L. M. Davis
B. N. Craig
Miss Octavia Owens
R. J. Hagins & Bro.
G. A. Watts & Co.

Furniture

W. G. Reid & Co.
A. D. Holler

Buggies, Carriages
General Repair Shops

W. G. Reid & Co.

Lumber, Brick & Tile
Manufacturer & Contractor

A. D. Holler

Presbyterian Church, W. B. Jennings, Pastor, Episcopal Ch. E. N.
Joyner, Rector.

Tin Roofing
Mfu. Tin Goods

J. W. Westerlund

Methodist Church, J. B. Traywick, Pastor, Baptist Church, A. P.
Pugh, Pastor.

Dentists

Glenn Bros.
J. B. Patrick, Jr.

Military Co. Catawba Rifles-Capt. Allen Jones, (Building & Loan co.)

Dealers Stores &
Tin Ware, Machines & Co.

J. J. Hagins

Mfs. Boots and Shoes
& Leather Goods

J. C. Sharpe
A. Johnson & Son
W. W. Evans

Agricultural
Implements Engines & c

J. R. London
J. G. Anderson & Co.

Market Houses

²
E. Y Mills
V. B. McFadden

Livery & Sale Stables

McClellan & Thomas
John Ratterree
A. Friedheim & Bro.
Hope & Son
D. P. Steele
J. B. Johnson
Henry Toole
Stephen Knox

Barber Shops

E. P. Lugand

Marble Yard

Telegraph Offices

Southern - Wm. Dillingham
Western Union - E. B. Rock

Post Office

Miss B. Wood

Hotels

1-Globe²⁻ & Gordon House

Banking Houses

1-J. M. Ivy & Co. and W. L. Roddey & Son²⁻

Flouring Mill & Cotton Gin

W. B. Fewell

Cotton Factory

A. E. Hutchison, President

Jeweller

C. F. May

Broker

F. H. London

Insurance Agencies

1-Alexander²⁻ - Jones³⁻ - London^{4-J.J.} - Waters

Masonry^N Lodge No. 111

Bratton Chapter No. 31

Campbell Council No. 18

3 Establishments for Millinery⁺

Knights of Honor¹ - Legion of Honor¹
1,000^{1,000} Fellows - Dress Making

R. R. Agent

A. R. Heyward

Tailor Shop

^{MR.}
~~Wm.~~ Shorthouse

Blk. Smith Shop

^{MR.}
~~Wm.~~ Neisler

Three Fire Companies

Two Brass Bands

Business Houses That Are Still In Existence Today And That Were In Business Prior To The Year 1900 .

1. Rock Hill Hardware Co. 1893
2. A.Friedheim & Bro. 1866
3. R.T.Fewell & Co. 1895
4. Cooper Furniture Co. 1895

? (Was this the same concern? I doubt it.)

Fraternal Orders & Their Approximate Charter Dates.

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|-------------------------|------|
| Masonic Lodge | 1865 |
| Sterling Lodge #344 | 1923 |
| Order of Eastern Star | 1928 |
| Old Hickory Post #2889 | |
| Veteran of Foreign Wars | 1933 |
| R.H.Chapter of Hadassah | 1940 |
| B'Nai B'rith | 1948 |

Civic or Service Clubs----Charter Dates.

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|--------------------|---------------|
| Rotary Club | Dec. 12, 1918 |
| Lions Club | Apr. 29, 1929 |
| Jr. Welfare League | Aug. 15, 1938 |
| Civic Club | Feb. 1941 |
| Crescent Shrine | Oct. 1, 1946 |
| R.H.Executive Club | Mch. 1, 1950 |
| Kiwanis Club | 1921. |