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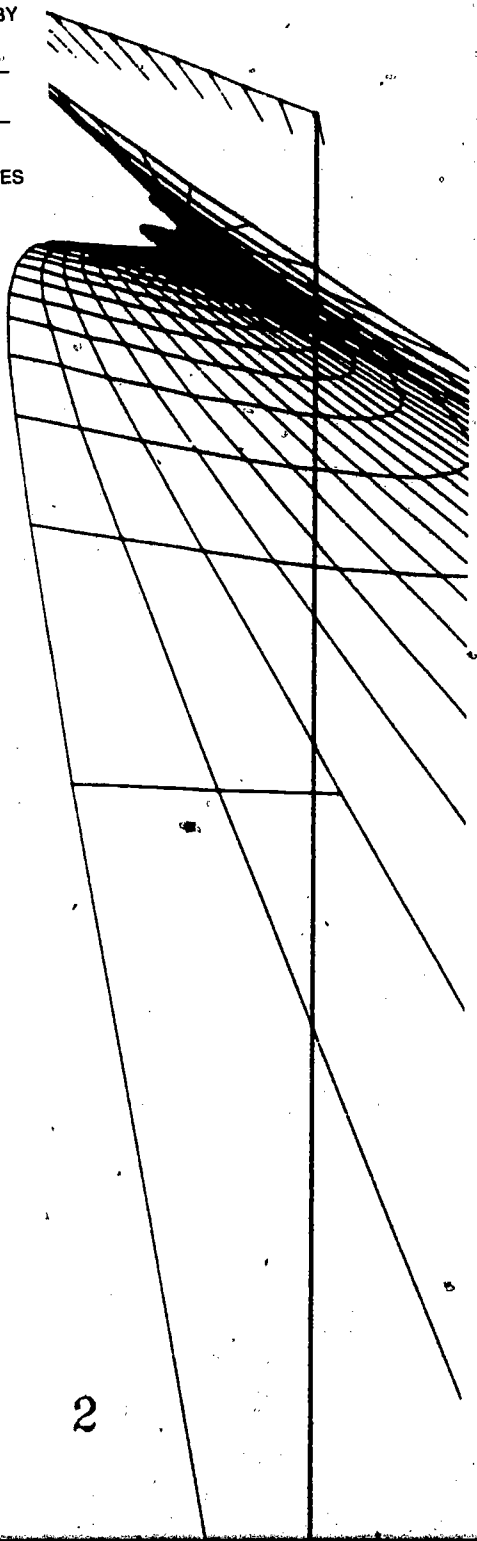
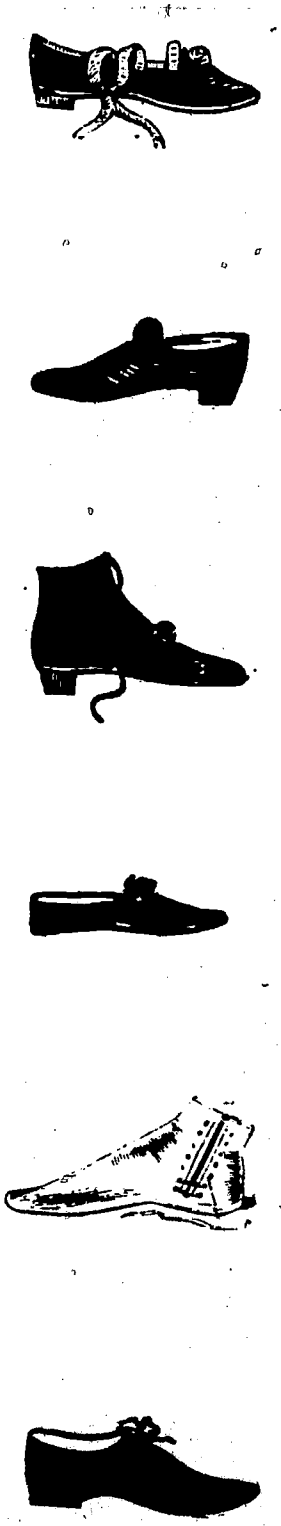
ABSTRACT

Presented are winning essays written by junior and senior high school students for the historical paper category of the 1982 National History Day program contest. This unique program encourages young people to explore a historical subject related to a specific theme. The winning papers, responding to the 1982 theme of trade and industry in history, deal with the topics of the salt industry; mills, with an emphasis on Soper's Mill in Story County, Iowa; child labor; mercantilism; a plank road built in Missouri and its effect on the surrounding area; and the history of a family-owned retail shoe store. A list of winners in other categories of the program contest, including group project, individual performance, group performance, and special awards, is included. Also provided are listings of the state coordinators, contributors to the program, and the Board of Trustees. (RM)

Trade and Industry in History

National History Day 1982





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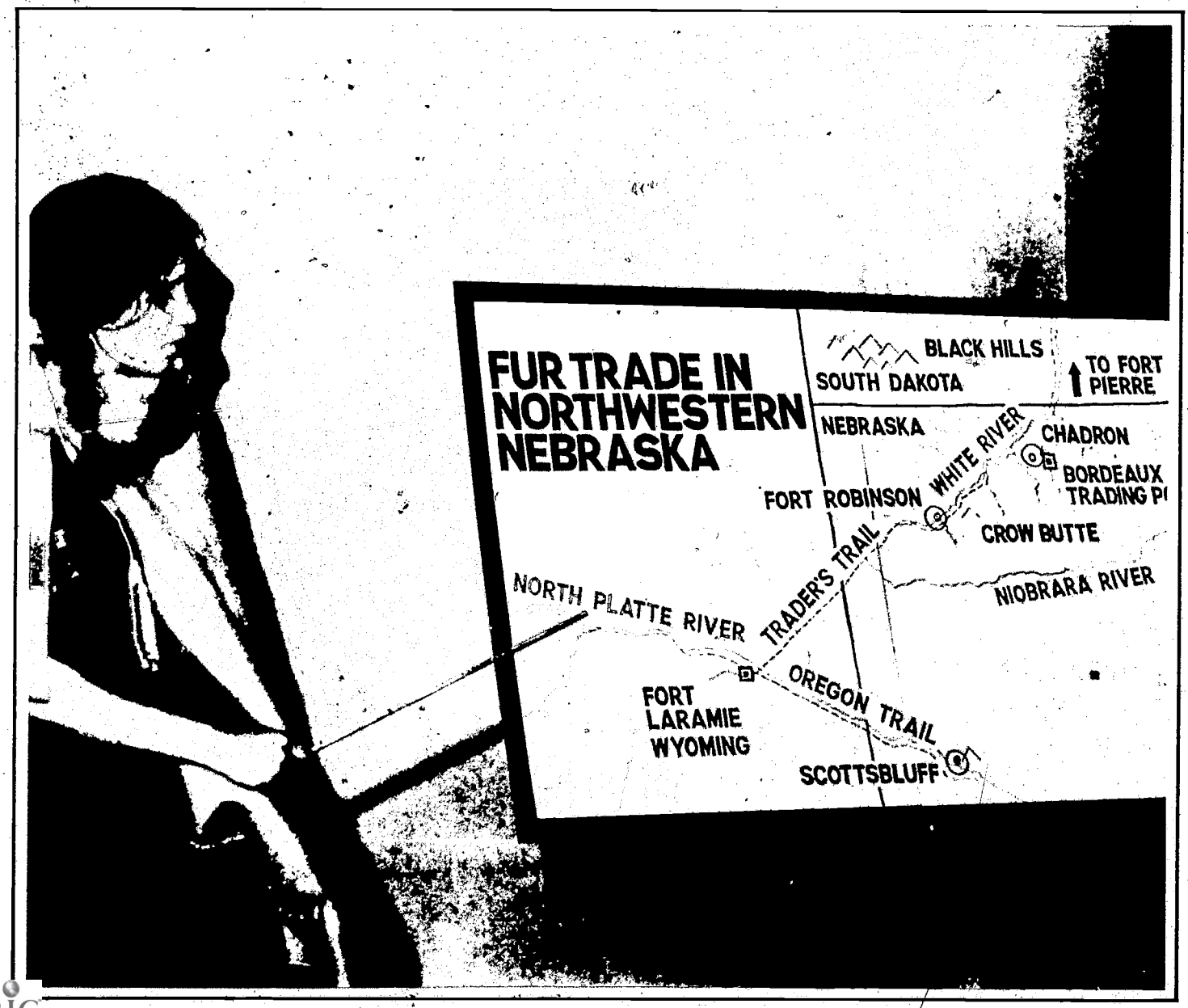
National History Day is directed from the campus of Case Western Reserve University.

Introduction

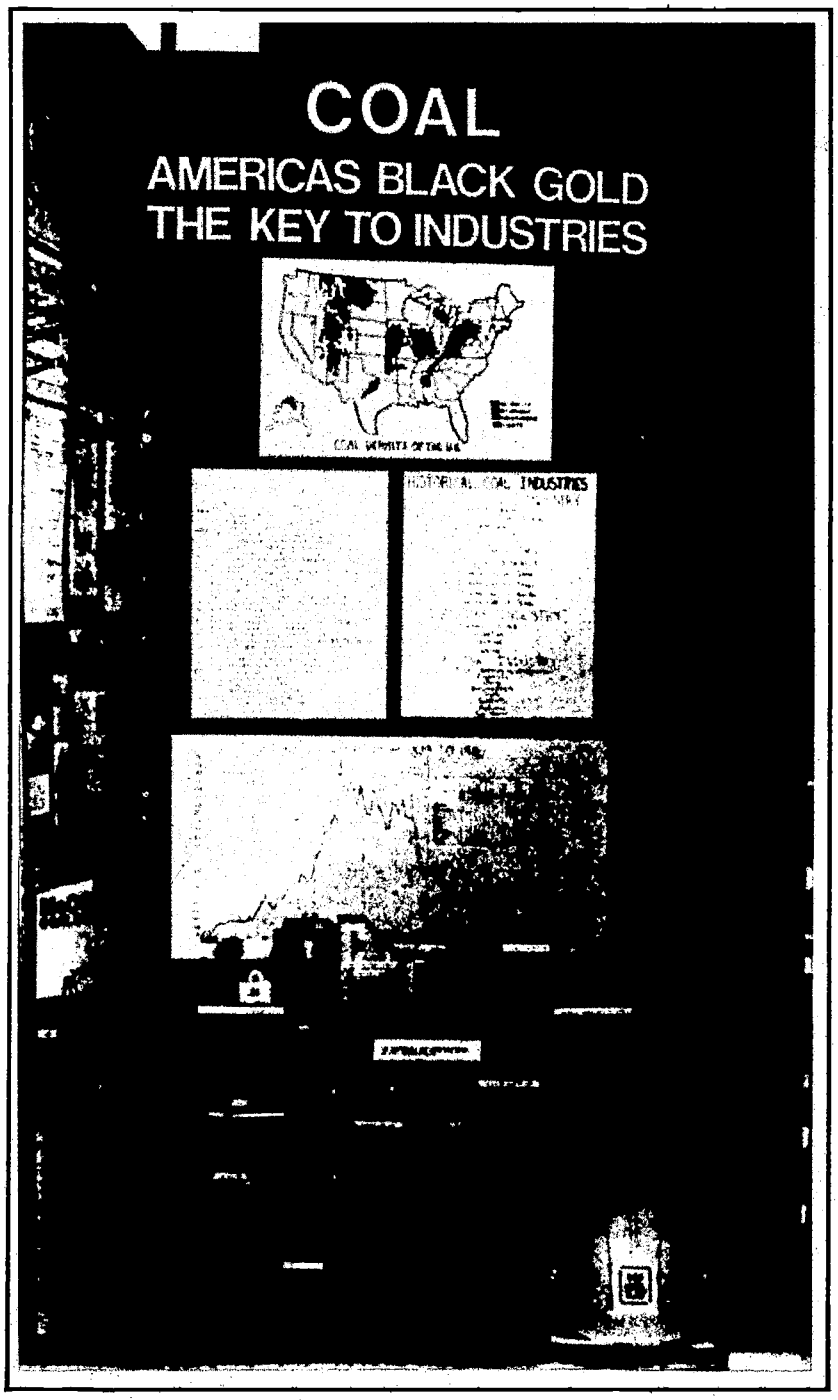
National History Day is a unique program which encourages young people to explore an historical subject related to a theme. History comes alive through the students' creative and imaginative projects, papers and performances. For the young researcher, History Day projects may lead to oral interviews, to forgotten family letters, mildewed journals or newspapers, old photographs and participation in traditional celebrations.

In 1982, students in grades six through 12 wrote or produced projects for the theme, Trade and Industry in History. Participants did their work in competition with other students and were judged by historians. The students visited a college campus where district contests were held in each participating state. District winners then attended their state's contest. The winners from all participating states met in Washington, D.C. for National History Day 1982.

Presented here are the first, second and third place winners, Junior and Senior level, for the Historical Paper category. For the purposes of this publication illustrations and charts have been omitted, and some of the essays have been edited.


FUR TRADE IN NORTHWESTERN NEBRASKA
BLACK HILLS
SOUTH DAKOTA
TO FORT PIERRE
NEBRASKA
WHITE RIVER
CHADRON
BORDEAUX TRADING P
FORT ROBINSON
CROW BUTTE
TRADER'S TRAIL
NIOBRARA RIVER
NORTH PLATTE RIVER
OREGON TRAIL
FORT LARAMIE WYOMING
SCOTTSBLUFF

Contents



Pass the Salt, Please!

By Miriam L. Womack

My ancestor, John Hemphill, was referred to by Arkansas historians as the "first white industrialist" in Arkansas. He was regarded by those who knew him as a man of great ability, wisdom, love for family, and deep concern for the future of Hemphill Settlement, now the town of Arkadelphia, Arkansas.

Saline Creek is now called Bayou Sel, and has been added to the National Register of Historical Places.

While writing this paper, it became apparent to me that salt is essential to sustain life. An animal or man without adequate salt in his food will soon grow feeble and will die. Enterprising pioneers, with foresight and in the face of personal danger, started various industries of which we make use of the end product every day to survive. John Hemphill, the Bean brothers, and Samuel Mackey were three such people.

Salt is such a cheap and common-place article in one's kitchen and upon one's dining table that little thought is given to its origin and history. There is, in every grain of salt, a story full of romance and wonder.

Several million years ago, while our earth was being formed, seas of salt were buried under tons of earth and rock. Today's salt comes from the pure salt formed during the drying process of the seas. Underground streams of water flow over or through these salt beds, forming salt springs and salt lakes.

Since earliest times man has been conscious of his need for salt in his diet to live each day; man without sufficient salt in his food grows feeble. He will go great distances and will endure many hardships to secure a bountiful supply of it.[1]

Animals must also have salt to live. They will instinctively search for salt, often traveling great distances to find pools or "salt licks."

Not many years ago in Africa, salt was so highly valued that natives were willing to sell their wives and children for it. Many countries have levied taxes and gone to war over the "precious mineral."

On the North American continent, the earliest man followed the deeply worn trails of wild animals to find this life-sustaining substance. Friendly Indian tribes gathered at the salt lakes and springs. While the women collected their salt supply in sacks of tanned skins, the men of the tribes sat in council to plot strategy and war on other, hostile Indians.

The first methods of obtaining salt by these Indians is thought to have been to drain the salt water pools. After the water evaporated, salt was left on the ground. Using feathers, Indian squaws then brushed up the dry salt that had accumulated around the edges of the pools.

Salt played an important part in the treaties with the white men. Earliest settlers went out of their way to secure salt to live. The importance of salt is noted by early pioneers. They fed it to their livestock to keep them hardy to do the hard work in the fields. The women seasoned the food eaten by their families so they would stay well and healthy. Salt was used to tan the leather skins the settlers used to make their shoes, boots, hats, handbags, and the bags to carry their belongings in. The "precious mineral" tanned the leather skins the settlers sold and traded for other necessities of life.

In 1804, President Thomas Jefferson sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the land acquired in the Louisiana Purchase. In their journals they described the salt making methods of the Indian tribes they met as well as their own efforts to obtain this needed mineral. Lewis and Clark noted that in these tribes several of the party were named salt makers. In January, 1805, Lewis and Clark wrote that they were getting three quarts to a gallon of fine white salt a day. Clark wrote:

> This was a great treat to myself and most of the party, having had none since the twentieth of last month. Not only did the food taste good, our bodies felt some stronger.[2]

With settlement of the Louisiana Purchase, new sources of salt became available to settlers. To them, there was no other region in North America that was better prepared by nature to sustain them than this area. The fertile lands, the wild game, and the timber along with a good system of rivers and streams suggested commerce and trade could be very profitable. Sensing these commercial possibilities in the manufacture of salt, enterprising settlers started their salt works at salt springs as close to navigable streams as possible.

In 1812, in the part of the Missouri Territory that became the Territory of Arkansas, the first industry for the state of Arkansas was born.

John Hemphill came from South Carolina to Arkansas in 1811. He and his family traveled by covered wagon across the states of Georgia, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Mr. Hemphill and his family were the first settlers of "Hemphill Settlement," now the town of Arkadelphia.

While making his home in the little village with his family, mother-in-law, and a number of slaves, Hemphill began to look for business opportunities. As he farmed the land across the Ouachita (Wash-i-taw) River from the settlement, he decided to refine salt from nearby Saline Creek for the settlers and the friendly Indians in the area. He could send the salt down river to New Orleans to trade for items to sustain the settlers, he thought. Before the year had ended, Hemphill traded with the Quapaw Indians for the land near the salt waters of Saline Creek. This was the first of several primitive salt works that was to become part of Arkansas' colorful beginning.

It is noted in historical writings:

> The first salt works by John Hemphill was simply five or six kettles set up by the salt waters of Saline Creek. The water was dipped out of the kettles into baskets. The product was sold for $4.00 a bushel though the price later fell to $1.50 a bushel.[4]

From the beginning it was apparent to Mr. Hemphill that salt making could be a profitable business. He made a trip to New Orleans by 1814 by keel boat to purchase 60 larger kettles. He recorded his proposed trip in a handwritten will:

> I John Hemphill of the Upper Louisiana Territory having to go a dangerous journey think proper to make this my last will and testament. . . . As witnessed my hand this and seal this 27th September, 1814. . . .

These vessels had been used in southern Louisiana to boil down sugar cane into juice. Some held as much as 200 gallons and Hemphill felt they would be just the thing for salt refining.

On his arrival back at the settlement, Hemphill dug another well by the Saline Creek site. He set these kettles in dirt furnaces under wood-roofed buildings. The larger kettles were placed in front directly over the fire, the smallest at the rear of the furnace. The salt water from the saline creek was then poured into the larger kettles. As it boiled down, it was dipped back from kettle to kettle to the last and smallest kettles where the salt began to form a grain that was similar to cornmeal mush. These kettles were then emptied into troughs, one end of which was slightly elevated, and any remaining water was then drained off, leaving the salt.

Soon Hemphill was producing a great quantity of salt. Two brothers, Jacob and John Barkman, were interested in getting the salt, along with products produced by the pioneers, to market in New Orleans. These items would then be traded for necessities the settlement needed.

Historians make these comments about early life in the territory:

> The Barkman brothers constructed several small boats out of hollow cypress logs; loaded the salt, farm-cotton, pelts, tallow, bears' oil and skins of leather. They set out on the long laborious journey down the Ouachita, Black, Red and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans. The cargo was sold; purchases of gunpowder, medicine, coffee, sugar and other household items were made. The Barkman brothers then began the return trip to the Settlement.[6]

A means of trade had now been established outside the territory; Jacob and John Barkman started the first shipping line to travel the Black, Ouachita, and Mississippi Rivers.

The Hemphill Salt Works continued in operation after his death (in 1819) until 1850, run by members of his family. These included Jonathan Callaway, a great-grandson of Daniel Boone who married Amy, the daughter of John. Competition from heavier deposits in Louisiana brought about the closing of the Salt Works.

The earliest manufacture of salt for commercial purposes in the upper Western Arkansas Territory, now a part of Oklahoma, dates from 1815. Bernarro R. Mouille operated a salt works on the west bank of the Grand River, east of the present town of Mazie, Oklahoma. This establishment, known as Campbell's Salt Works, was in operation until 1819. When the works was in operation, it took only 80 gallons of water to produce a bushel of salt; thus 120 bushels could be made in a week. The salt made here was of a fine grade.[7]

Governor Izard wrote of a salt works in the upper Arkansas Territory in 1817:

> Mark and Richard H. Bean opened a salt works on the Illinois River near its junction with the Arkansas River. As salt was scarce in the settlements on the Arkansas, Major William Bradford, Commandant at Fort Smith, urged them to make salt there for the use

of the garrison and the white settlements. These works produced a large output of salt which contributed much to the comfort of the settlements.[8]

From a well and a few kettles, the salt works grew until they had extensive equipment that included two drying houses and a large warehouse for finished salt. There were 100 iron kettles in clay furnaces in wood-roofed buildings. They made from 35 to 40 bushels of salt per day and sold it for $1.00 a bushel. The Bean brothers then built boats in which they shipped the salt down the Arkansas River, in addition to supplying the settlers and friendly Indians.

The Arkansas Gazette reports:

In 1828 Samuel Mackey set up a salt works on the east bank of the Illinois River near the military roads from Fort Smith to Fort Gibson. In addition to a prosperous trading post where the people brought goods to sell and trade for the salt and other items of need, Mr. Mackey shipped salt up and down the Illinois and Arkansas Rivers to the ever growing settlements for sale and trade.[9]

On Skin Bayou, a Cherokee Indian, George Guess (or Sequoyah) operated a salt works on Lee's Creek. It was about ten miles northeast of the present Sallisaw, Oklahoma. He set up kettles in furnaces and with wood fuel used the evaporation of the salt water and the "lifting" of the residue salt. As he sold his salt to customers, he began to dream of building a school to make his people literate. After his death, Joseph Coody operated the salt works and made the dream of Sequoyah's a reality.[10]

At the junction of the Spavinaw and Grand Rivers, in the territory that belonged to the Osage Indians, a Cherokee, Mr. McNair, operated a salt works. He built a brick furnace that held his kettles and produced a fine grade of salt to supply both the Indians and the settlers.

In 1825, surveyors divided the Indian Territory and the Arkansas Territory. The line was to extend directly south from Fort Smith to the Red River. This took good salt-producing springs from the Indians and gave them to the Arkansas Territory. Many wars were fought because of this division, and the controversy was not settled until after the Civil War.

In 1827, some of the largest salt-producing springs in Arkansas were discovered as a result of the new boundary lines that were drawn. These were located in what is now Sevier County, Arkansas, the township of Horatio. Several salt works were then established. The salt produced was traded and sold to the Indians in the Indian Territory, now the state of Oklahoma.

The Southern Standard newspaper of Arkadelphia in its write-up of pioneer days states:

The Civil War brought on an urgent need for salt. The Confederate Government hired one M.S. Carpentar, an Arkadelphia pioneer and steamboatman, to supervise the new plant at the original Hemphill Salt Works site. Additional wells were

sunk and vessels to boil the salt water were made from the old boilers of ships that had been sunk or abandoned on the Ouachita River. A large dirt furnace was constructed and much wood fuel was gathered to keep it going night and day by negro slaves. Even this feverish activity failed to furnish an adequate supply of salt to the Confederate Army. The salt made here was of the highest quality.[11]

The farmers fed their stock corn soaked in salt water to keep them alive. It was said that local inhabitants found it hard to get any of the salt made almost at their front door. The market value of salt during the Civil War was $10.00 a bushel. One woman rode 50 miles to get one pound! Resourceful women dug up the dirt from the floors of their smokehouses and processed it to get even a little salt for their cooking needs. Federal troops finally took Arkadelphia and the salt works was closed once more.

It has been noted in history books of Arkansas that these early primitive salt works supplied almost all of the salt used in Arkansas, Northern Louisiana, Eastern Texas, and portions of Tennessee and Mississippi. There were many more primitive salt works in Arkansas of which history has no record, probably because they were too removed from a navigable stream or river.

Sadly, with the invention of the locomotive, salt could be brought into the state from the eastern states where larger and more modern salt refineries could manufacture it at less cost than it could be manufactured in Arkansas. This closed the curtain on the colorful drama of the primitive salt works of Arkansas.

Today, one of Hemphill's large kettles is mounted on the campus of Henderson State Teachers College in Arkadelphia. The people of the town and the state of Arkansas share the pride of this "link of history" of Arkadelphia and the state of Arkansas.

NOTES

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2. Olive Burt, *The First Book of Salt.* (New York: Franklin Watts, Ind., 1965), p. 33.
3. Based on personal correspondence between Mr. John A. Hemphill, great-grandson of John Hemphill, who lives in Little Rock, Arkansas, and the writer, November, 1981.
4. Statement by Andrew Hemphill, in a personal interview, Tomball, Texas, June, 1981.
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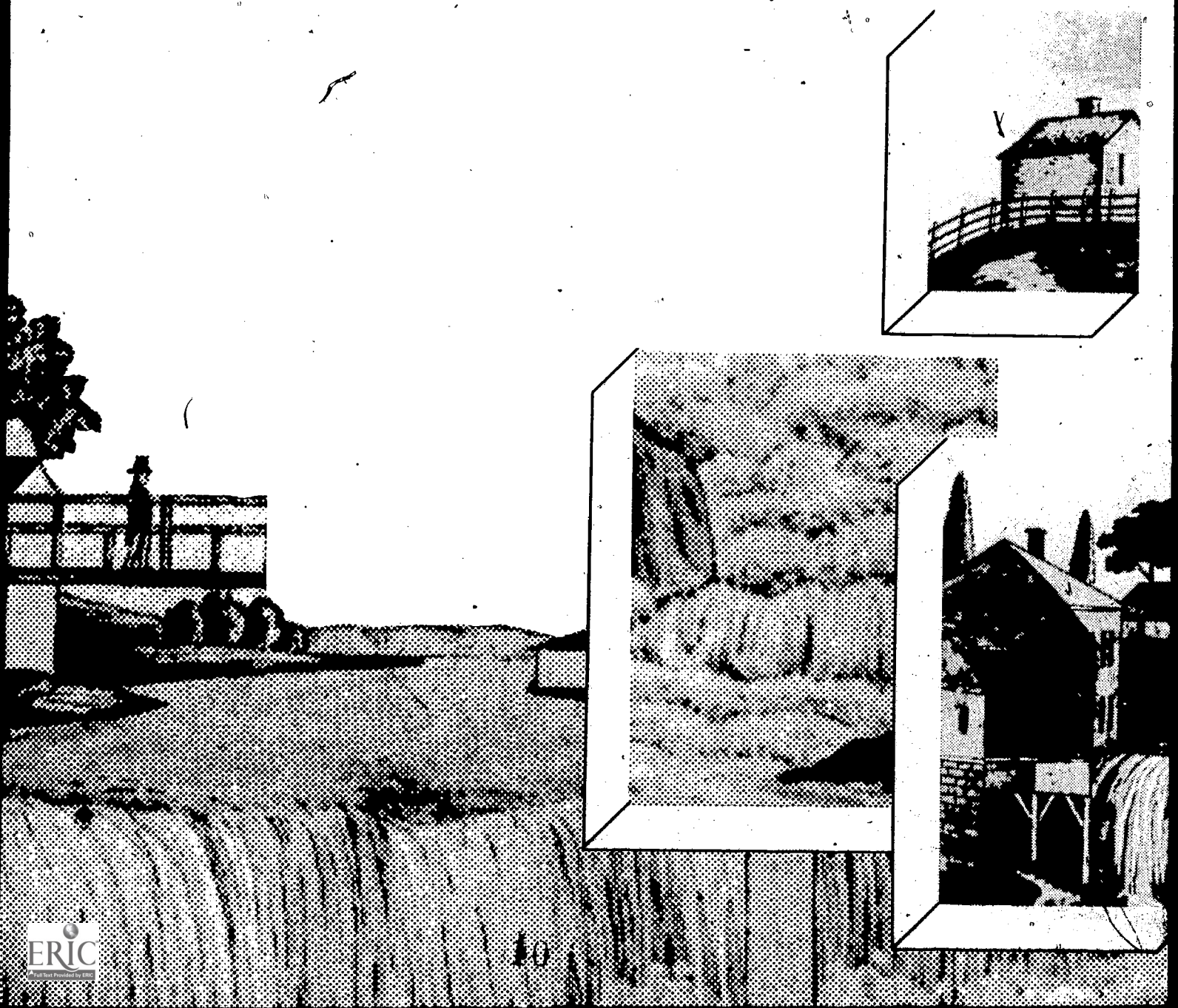
Soper's Mill

By David Ross

Daily, many people travel north out of Ames on Highway 69, not realizing that they pass within two-and-one-half miles of the site of an old mill. Yet this mill—Soper's Mill—was one of the largest mills in Story County, Iowa, 100 years ago. The mill was somewhat unusual in that it began as a sawmill but attained its fame as a gristmill. This report is about mills in general and Soper's Mill in particular.



Mills were the backbone of our economy in the time of the westward expansion. They provided wood for the settlers' cabins, and flour for the settlers' bread, pancakes, and other flour-based foods. Finally, they provided places for the settlers to go for picnics, fishing, and other social events. Indeed, the mill was a bustling place in the old days.

There were many mills in Story County, Iowa, both sawmills and gristmills. Sawmills usually cut walnut, for it would hold up well in the harsh Iowa winters. However, the sawmills would also cut any other wood that someone wanted if they had access to it.

The old mills gradually died out between the first 20 years of the twentieth century.

Soper's Mill was built on the Skunk River by Thomas Hughes (usually called T. R.) and three of his nephews sometime between 1854 and 1871.

After the sawmill was running well, Hughes and his employees would travel upstream two miles, cut down several walnut trees, float them downstream until they caught on the mill's dam, haul them in, and cut the logs up. They had a good business. The dam was shaped like a wedge to force the ice over the dam so that the ice would break up. I suspect that the mill had a flutter wheel because an "overshot wheel" demands a larger river than the Skunk River and an "undershot wheel" is used without a dam. When a flutter wheel is used, the wheel is positioned below the dam. The water is forced through a flue positioned in front of the wheel into the middle of the front side of the wheel, forcing the wheel to turn as the water falls.

Sometime between 1861 and 1871 T.R. sold the sawmill to T.K. Soper, who modified the mill into a gristmill. Soper had to tear down the old mill to make the gristmill, but the work soon paid off. Under the management of Y.G. Yelton the mill was operated smoothly and successfully.

Soper's Mill was then sold respectively to Hipsher and Eagelberger, Jimmie Noble, and P.J. Swearinger. Under the ownership and management of Hipsher and Eagelberger, a famous flour called "Soper's Superlative" was made with a base ingredient of either buckwheat or rye.

To show how successful Soper's Mill was under Y.G. Yelton, people would come from 30 to 40 miles to mill. James Noble would sell his grain for $4.00 per 100 weight. James Dodds once bought a total of nine tons of meal and chop-feed for his cattle. Glen Miller, a local Ames resident, claims that after nearby Hannum's Mill ceased operation, Soper's Mill got the grindstone and began to work double-time.

Finally, the old mill lapsed into disuse. No one knows why the mill was forced to shut down, but in my research I have read of several valid reasons. One, the draught of the [illegible] made the water level in the stream too low to turn the wheel. Two, improved transportation allowed for fewer and larger mills that could operate at a lower cost and could steal its business. Three, at the time that Soper's Mill ceased operation, many more efficient, steam-powered mills started their operation and could charge the public less, stealing Swearinger's business. Four, the depression of the 1890s made people too poor to pay for the service that Soper's Mill provided. Five, a disease called "wheat rust" infested the wheat in Story County—the people had no wheat to mill. Six, the water level in the Skunk was lowered either by the straightening of the river or by the improved drainage system in the farmers' fields, causing the river to drain more swiftly. Seven, the opening of the gravel pits lowered the Skunk's water level by having its water go into them. Or eight, a combination of any of the above caused it to lapse into disuse.

After Soper's Mill finally ceased operation, it was used extensively as a picnic ground and fishing area. It became the local place for parties, celebrations, and reunions. Even a baptismal service was held near Soper's Mill.

Sometime in the late 1940s, after the mill had been moved to a nearby hill, it was torn down and made into a barn. Later, it was torn down again and made into a new barn. This barn is still standing about 300 feet from where the mill was originally. The grindstone was broken up by vandals and people in cars that would accidentally run into it.

All that remains of Soper's Mill are a few memories, the barn, the bridge of an old road running near the mill that is now on the National Historic Register, several graves in the Pleasant Grove Cemetery near there (one of T.R. himself), the site of the mill, part of the WPA dam built in the 1930s downstream about a quarter of a mile, the foundations of T.R.'s second house, and a small trickle of a creek.

In doing this report, I have noticed that you can trust no one source entirely. For example, one book has the right person building it but has the date wrong. Other sources have been totally wrong.

The most common mistake people make about Soper's Mill is stating that T.K. Soper built it. One reason for this is that one old newspaper article had it wrong and practically every other source on the subject has copied the article or copied another source.

In doing this report, I learned several things. One, when doing a report you cannot trust wholly any written or oral material. Two, doing historical reports with "action research" can be fun. And three, I learned about Soper's Mill.

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The Generations That Childhood Bypassed

By Kristin Sinnock

Child laborers were one of our nation's main sources of labor before and during the Industrial Revolution. During the Industrial Revolution, the abuse of this labor was profound; children were robbed of their childhoods. Knowledge of this sad episode in our country's history should help us appreciate what childhood is today.

The practice of harsh child labor originated during England's Industrial Revolution. In America, child labor also reached its peak from about 1890 to 1910, during our Industrial Revolution. Children were actually used for labor as far back as the period of American settlement. The first Secretary of State, Alexander Hamilton, supported child labor. He thought it beneficial to a growing America.[1]

Before industries and factories came about in America, children helped their parents make things in the home. Although this work was strenuous, the young children were still in the company of their families. They often had time to play outside, and they were usually served decent meals. More importantly, they did not live by a time clock.

With the introduction of factories and large corporations, factory owners needed plenty of labor. This meant that the owners had to provide satisfactory conditions to attract workers. Due to the new need for labor, people by the masses headed for the cities, hoping to find a job and a chance at a better life. This urban movement on the whole was considered as being larger than western migration.

The urban population started increasing by great quantities, and due to this urban migration, as well as foreign immigration, labor became plentiful and therefore owners did not worry about working conditions for their employees. This not only affected adults, but children also, as they quickly became a main source of cheap labor.

During the Industrial Revolution home manufacturing, for the most part, came to a stop. Adults, especially parents, found themselves going to work in the factories for very low wages. As a consequence, children were also put to work for additional money to help the family to survive. These helpless children ended up losing their precious childhoods to the horrors of the factory.

The children of the rich people of this time enjoyed the convenience of school. Poor families were not so lucky. Since school was generally for the rich, the illiterate poor children were the primary labor supply. The poor families found that because their children had little opportunity for school, they might as well go to work in the deplorable, filthy factories for a few helping pennies.

Chronologically, child labor began in the factories at the opening of Samuel Slater's spinning mill in 1800. In this mill, all work was done by children from four to ten years of age. There was one adult in the entire factory —the supervisor.[2] In another textile mill of this time, nine children less than 12 years old were employed. In this same factory, ten years later, 100 children between the ages of four and ten years were employed.[3]

By 1820, over half the factory workers in the United States were children between nine and ten years of age. They made an average of 44 cents per week, working 13 hours a day.[4] In 1832, 42 percent of the boys under 12 years of age in the United States were employed as cotton mill workers.[5]

In 1870, 746,000 children between ten and 15 years of age were employed in factories. This figure was 13 percent of all children of this age in America.[6] And in the late 1800's, [illegible] million children spent their lives working in mines and factories for wages of pennies.

By the year 1900, the number of working children increased to 7.75 million. This was 18 percent of all ten- to 15-year-olds in America, including both boys and girls. In 1910, two million children between the ages of ten and 15 were employed, and half were girls.[7]

As is obvious, the number of laboring children increased. Although the numbers went up, the increase of the poor working conditions was far more frightening. Children spent their lives in a half-dead world, shut off from all happy things. Many became pallid and ghostlike because they spent most of their time indoors.

Looking at the conditions involved with child labor, we can see: (1) it interfered with education, for the poor who could afford it; (2) there were many hazardous health and safety problems; and (3) there were disquieting moral aspects. Child workers, as they entered the working world, failed to think of school days. They had no future chance to learn and had the doors shut to a better life. Their kind of labor was an endless road, only finishing by an injury, sickness, or death.

"No one smiles or laughs in a room not 20 feet square. Forty boys are picking their lives away."

The children worked long, tedious days, with an allowance of half an hour for meals. They were shut off from practically all other children their age, as well as from the outside world. Most worked from sunrise to sunset, anywhere from 12 to 14 hours daily. Some children even worked extra night shifts in addition to their daytime labor.[8]

In the mills of Paterson, New Jersey, rules were made so that children had to be at work at half past four in the morning. In a mill in Massachusetts, teenage girls worked 73½ hours a week, whereas today most adults work only 40 hours a week.[9] A visitor to a clothing mill described in deep horror what she saw:

> I saw Katie, my landlord's daughter, standing alone by her spooler. She has a box to stand on, for she is not tall enough to reach her place of work. Her hands are very thin and bony. She looks like she hasn't eaten in weeks. Her face is wiped of all emotion; she simply stares down, unmoved by anything. I approach her and ask of her age. She replies 10, although she looks 6. I knew that children were commanded to lie about ages. She makes 40¢ a day where at the same time, she's dying in her youthful life.[10]

The children only saw the sun as they walked to work in the morning. After work they were so physically exhausted that once they reached home they fell asleep immediately, at the table or on the stairs. The children, totally drained of their energy, were beyond speech. They had to be carried to "bed," where their bodies lay on a pile of rags or simply on a hard floor, unwashed and undressed. They slept until at the crack of dawn their mills called them to work. They went to work speechless, for most remained in an almost hypnotized sleep.

Most families of the child laborers were quite poor, and they lived in small shanties in the crowded city slums. A child's "playground" might be a fire escape, where there was barely enough room to walk around, let alone play. Some people simply could not afford a place to stay and so resorted to living on the streets, sleeping on benches or in empty alleys. Those who did live in some kind of shelter were faced with the problem of not having enough food. Most often the meals were served on a pine board and consisted of hominy, molasses, and, when the money was available, salt, ham, and pork.

While working in the factories, it was not uncommon for children to hurt themselves. They were forced to keep working. They had no choice; even if they were fatigued or hurt, they had to keep working.

Due to the overcrowded conditions in which they worked, many children became physically deformed. Some who worked in the factories breathed in all kinds of poisonous gases, which caused asthma and other harmful diseases.

In mines, where boys often worked as "breaker boys," picking out pieces of slate and other refuse from coal, many accidents occurred. The worst thing that could happen was when a boy would get mangled and torn in the machinery. He disappeared down the chute where he was later picked out, smothered and dead. Whenever such an event happened, the other boys kept right on working, unaware of the misfortune.[11] A description of a breaker room reads as follows:

> No one smiles or laughs in a room not 20 feet square. Forty boys are picking their lives away. The floor is an inclined plane, where streams of coal pour constantly from above. There are five or six rows of rough board seats, being very low and dirty. Boys sit here and separate slate from coal as it runs down the floor. Not three boys in the room could read or write. They had no knowledge of pleasant things, or even what they were doing. They knew nothing except the difference between slate and coal.[12]

Laws protecting powerless children did not come about immediately. Once some

were made, they were not enforced as often as they should have been. Employer opposition to the laws was stronger than the horrifying cries for help by the children in the factories.

In 1900, children stood alone, the law unaware of their position among the working class.[8] It was not until a group of journalists known as the "Muckrakers" became so well known that their ideas and work helped to form the Progressive Movement, which fought for the rights of child laborers and the working class. In 1904, a National Child Labor Committee was formed. Soon two out of every three states had child labor laws, although the child labor problem was still evident. Big businesses had a lot of influence on such investigating groups. Laws were made, but the factories usually found ways to get around them.

In 1932, only half of the states in the Union had laws requiring what the National Child Labor Committee considered minimum standards. In 1938, a federal law was passed regulating child labor as a part of the Fair Labor Standards Act. By this time child labor was very minimal. The worst of it was over, and the government seemed to wait until then to do anything major about it. This, however, may be partially due to the factories' influence on law-making bodies as well as the fact that unions were not yet strong enough to protect the rights of workers.

As we look into history, we frown on the thought of chlid labor. What went on in those factories is hard to believe, but it happened; and nothing can change that now. Children of today can be thankful that their young lives are not spent in dreary factories. They do not live by a time clock, but by the pleasant happenings that make a childhood so meaningful. For those adults who are asking to do away with government regulations, we can only hope that history will not repeat itself. There was a time when children desperately needed government regulations.

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Three Examples of Mercantilism

By Anne W. Mullen

At first glance, it would seem almost ludicrous to propose that mercantilist policies, so thoroughly divorced from the American economy in time and political context, could ever have played a part in the formation of the United States' economic establishment. However, various facets of these same policies have resurfaced from time to time throughout American history sporting new names and intended for different purposes. The mercantilist hailed government intervention as the ultimate cure for economic ills and, needless to say, a similar attitude has been espoused by many prominent Americans and influential foreigners.

This basic principle has been well illustrated in three divergent areas: Alexander Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures,*

the Keynesian prescription for economic problems in the United States; and a number of theories and procedures on how to strengthen the economy propounded during the last few years. Of course, the mercantilists' objectives differed greatly from those of Hamilton, Keynes, and the modern economic theorists, but in many cases the result was the same, an escalation of government involvement in the economic system. Hamilton hoped to build up a vulnerable, new country; Keynes sought a cure for unemployment and inflation; and recent policy-makers have attempted and are still attempting to bolster a weakening economy undermined by "stagflation."

It hardly seems possible that mercantilism could be involved in any of these situations. Yet, many of the methods employed to reach these widely varying ends are remarkable in their similarity, as are the concepts which fostered them and the sometimes unintentional results. One could even say the outmoded and denigrated policies of bullionism and colonialism have an almost indiscernible parallel in the modern economy.

The idea that the crown had not only the right but also the duty to manipulate the economy pervaded the thinking of the mercantile era.[1] As Europe moved further out of the Middle Ages, the nation-state became a viable alternative to the feudal system, and, as a natural consequence, power over economic policy-making all but disappeared from the local scene to be replaced by comprehensive, national plans.

The government acquired a much larger role as contractor, entrepreneur, and regulator of private enterprise,[2] even taking on many functions performed previously by guilds, towns, churches, provinces, and feudal lords. It sought to control industry, commerce, poor relief, taxation, and all laws pertaining to economic matters. In fact, the mercantile system could be renamed economic statism.[3] This title is particularly appropriate for, in the clear light of hindsight, the true purpose of the mercantile state can be discerned.

Ostensibly, the government hoped both to protect and encourage the nation's commerce by, among other things, investing companies with the power to monopolize production in certain areas and then upholding this power against interlopers, foreign or otherwise. The full authority of the state, represented by customs and tax officials, the navy, the army, and the diplomatic corps, was then charged with the preservation of the national trust. However, all such policies were formulated with the sole intention of promoting the prestige and strength of the state.[4] Those who understood accepted this doctrine as right and proper. The concensus held that if anything went awry, the state would cure it, and, if something needed to be done, the would either do it or assist with it. What is more, the mercantilists believed the best stimulation for private initiative and enterprise should be a reward from the government.[5]

In its emphasis on the regulation of trade and the promotion of production, Alexander Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures* resembles closely the purer forms of mercantilism. Just as the mercantilist worked to insure his nation's self-sufficiency,[6] Hamilton hoped to render his country independent of Europe economically and militarily.[7]

In order to encourage the expansion of domestic manufactures, Hamilton envisioned a program of federal aid to industry. It would include a complex tariff system highly reminiscent of the taxes employed by mercantilists to create a favorable "balance of trade."[8] Under the former, policy duties would have been levied on fabricated imports to such a degree in some cases as to become prohibitive.

"Keynes did not intend for the government to remain active in the economy during times of prosperity—only that it should intervene to correct troubles and aberrations."

Hamilton believed these tariffs would protect American industry from price competition with items cheaper to manufacture in Europe and also allow new industries to develop. What is more, those materials necessary to a large yield of products should also be withheld from foreign trade through certain injunctions against their export.[9] Similarly, the mercantilists imposed restrictions on commerce in order to keep business and industry in the hands of the native merchants.[10] Just as Hamilton proposed, they, too, felt high tariffs on the import of manufactured goods with the export of raw materials and low tariffs on the export of manufactured goods with the import of raw materials would result in a self-sufficient nation boasting a full treasury.[11]

In addition, Hamilton's economic policy reflects that of the mercantilist in that he felt the state should reimburse manufacturers out of tariff revenues to encourage greater production. Such payments would be called "bounties"; "premiums" would be given to industrialists who produced a particularly fine item or who solved an especially baffling technical problem. The government would also be empowered to inspect finished products to make sure that progress continued and that high standards were maintained.[12]

These measures are evocative of many mercantile laws such as the Cloth Act of 1552 which laid down strict standards for 22 varieties of wool cloth.[13] Finally, just as Hamilton hoped to build up a supply of vital goods in America, the mercantilists attempted to make sure that supplies of such items as gunpowder, soap, alum, paper, brass, copper, and glass would always be sufficient by granting monopoly power to many companies.[14]

Since neither Hamilton nor the mercantilists encouraged export of raw materials, their policies, especially in America, were detrimental to the agricultural community. The American farmer depended for his livelihood on the sale of those same raw materials abroad. Since the export of any materials needed by the manufacturers was also prohibited, the farmers would be forced to sell for a lower price in the domestic market. They would have to buy local manufactures at a higher price than imports, thus effectively subsidizing their own market.[15] Fortunately or not, Hamilton's recommendations were ignored by Congress for the most part, and it was left to a later date for mercantilism to become active in America.[16]

Originally, Keynes did not espouse a policy of permanent, national intercession in the business world; he simply propounded a solution to specific problems plaguing American and Western European capitalist societies. In fact, his book, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money,* could accurately be described as a defense of a course of action already in progress in the United States, i.e., the New Deal with its emphasis on massive government spending, WPA projects, etc.[17]

Keynes did not intend for the government to remain active in the economy during times of prosperity—only that it should intervene to correct troubles and aberrations.[18] Unfortunately, he did not take into account that it would be easier for the state to instigate a program of economic restraint than it would be to dismantle one.

In order to understand a comparison of Keynesian and mercantilist theories, a good deal of pertinent background information on the former is necessary. Keynesian economics came into favor during the years of the Great Depression when it was discovered that the proponents of classical economic ideas could not even explain the crash, much less prescribe a cure.[19]

During the 1800s, the people who saved their money were basically the same people who invested it.[20] This led to the belief that the economy would tend towards an equilibrium at full employment.

On the other hand, Keynes felt that an "underemployment equilibrium" was quite possible, for, with the rise of the middle class,

savers and investors were no longer the same. Depression and unemployment would arise when it became inexpedient for the business world to invest as much as people saved out of their incomes.[21] What is more, the transferral of money from one person to another keeps the economy vital. When savings are not invested, that money is in effect being kept out of someone's pocket.[22] This reduced buying power would result in a slump, a recession, even a depression.[23] Since the unemployed exert very little demand on the economy, the recession could well be self-perpetuating.[24]

At this point, the first, general similarity between the modem system and mercantilism becomes apparent in the solution offered by Keynes. Just as the government under mercantile theory was held responsible for correcting flaws in the economy, Keynes felt that government spending could save the economy and eradicate unemployment by increasing demand.[25] If the administration were to borrow money, go into debt, and invest, then the discrepancy between savings and investment would disappear.[26] Conversely, if demand became too high, generating inflated prices, the government should then increase taxes to lessen that demand. As a result, during an inflationary period such as this, the national finances should be in the black.[27] Naturally, these explanations are highly simplified, but they serve to show that the underlying premises of Keynesian and mercantile economics have much in common.

As time passed, the simple theorems listed above came to mean an ever-increasing modification of the free market. During World War II, Keynes suggested that a policy of deferred savings be instituted in Britain, forcing all workers to set aside a portion of their paychecks to be invested in government bonds. These could be redeemed only after the war. Along with other methods to effect an increase in savings, the deferred payment plan never really caught on, but it is representative of Keynesian thinking.[28] In the United States, too, the economy was having trouble in that many corporations were able to raise their prices long before all the unemployed had been reabsorbed into the system. In consequence, wage demands burgeoned until a wage-price spiral ensued and, finally, massive price fixing had to be installed.[29] Even after the war, the Keynesian support to the economy came to involve increasingly heavy spending on armament as well as welfare and other social programs. More and more, these programs became necessary to alleviate unemployment and poverty.[30] As a result of this supervention, businesses felt uneasy with their new role, cooperating with unions, obeying strict rules and regulations, and generally operating in an unfamiliar atmosphere. In consequence, they often [illegible]led that the government was overstepping its authority and were themselves less likely to invest.[31]

Under the mercantile system also, the power of the state was wholeheartedly involved in protecting and encouraging business investment, often with the opposite result. In the interest of control, the mercantilist placed great emphasis on foreign trade which passed through very few ports as opposed to the widespread domestic commerce. The latter, however, was often neglected in favor of the former. In addition, foreign traffic offered a ready excuse for intervention by the state since unfamiliar traders could possibly be harboring harmful or dishonorable intentions toward the nation.[32] Similarly, the present day concept of big business as a possible threat to the unemployed or underprivileged readily lends itself to the Keynesian insistence on curbing industrial activity.

The mercantilist was also very interested in limiting exchange to maintain a very high profit for the merchant. This, along with many other regulations such as the Cloth Act already mentioned and the Statute of Artificers of 1563,[33] frightened investors and hindered expansion of the economy. In the same way, businessmen had felt uncomfortable under new, Keynesian theories. The granting of monopolies by the mercantilists in order to maintain an adequate supply of staples and to help build up industrial and military capacity is evocative of Keynesian as well as Hamiltonian economics.[34]

". . . many attempts made by the United States government to protect the American economy have shown themselves quite similar to mercantile theories."

Under the former system, too, it was suggested that during the war governments subsidize the production of food and other essentials.[35] Even afterwards this policy of supporting unhealthy or necessary businesses continued, the most recent example being the federal aid to the Chrysler Corporation, the price supports given to farmers, or, say, the tobacco subsidies in the South.

As the mercantile administration expanded its field of operations, its appetite for money in the form of gold and silver bullion became ravenous. It was surmised that large sums of money would stimulate business and investment[36] as well as supporting the precarious royal finances. In consequence, various ploys were put into operation in order to accumulate the desired amount of specie.[37] The tariff system is representative in that such a situation was believed to create a favorable "balance of trade."[38] Since the duties discouraged imports, particularly of expensive manufactured goods, while encouraging exports, they created a surplus of money but also a dearth of consumer products.[39] The greater the government's need for specie, the more it interceded, and the more it intervened, the larger its hunger for money became.

The modem situation is similar in that the administration, while running a deficit, is pressed for money to meet the numerous obligations expected and demanded of it by the public. Instead of hoarding bullion as the mercantilists did, the United States government has often followed a policy of monetization to meet its many debts. The numerous increases in taxation which have taken place in recent years are also reflected in the mercantilist government's increasing reliance on the public as a tax base.[40] This frantic scrambling for funds is obviously self-perpetuating, and, in both cases, the devaluation of the monetary standard was induced since the intrinsic value of money was ignored.[41]

In recent years, many attempts made by the United States government to protect the American economy have shown themselves quite similar to mercantile theories. The import-export system previously described is largely recollective of the United States trade relations with foreign producers.

In particular, the issue of Japanese imports is a highly significant, contemporary issue which bears a striking resemblance to the problems faced by the mercantile nations. Just as the mercantilist relied on restricted foreign trade to protect domestic industry, the U.S. tried to pressure the Japanese into reducing their exports of manufactured goods and relaxing their injunctions against imports. In this manner, the United States hoped to remedy its "chronic and massive trade deficit," another name for an imbalance of trade.[42] More specifically, Detroit has turned protectionist in its attitude towards foreign imports of cars.

For the last decade the flow of Japanese autos into the U.S. economy had run at about 15% of all cars sold in America, but in 1979 this figure jumped to 22%, fanning the protectionists' anger and precipitating the talks between the two countries on how to remedy the deficit.[43] Television imports also created a furor when American manufacturers, bitter over the flood of Japanese T.V.'s on the market, accused the Japanese of "dumping" televisions or selling them at prices way below those charged in Japan.[44] T.V. quotas were eventually enforced, a typically mercantile solution to a mercantilist's nightmare.[45]

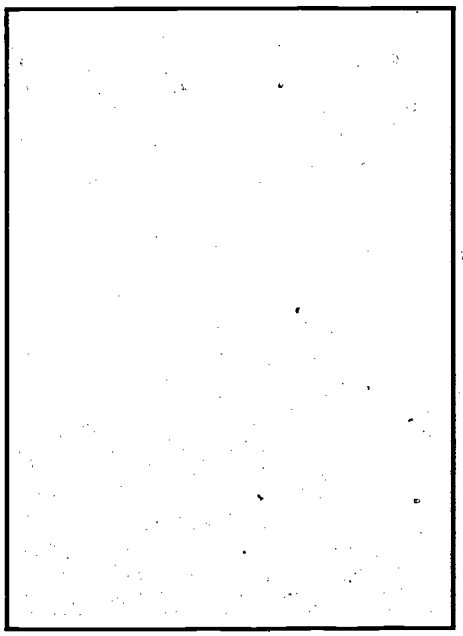
Colonies played a large part in the scheme of mercantilists' thinking, for they provided

both a market for goods and a source of raw materials. Such colonies were meant simply to serve the mother country and had to avoid competition with the home economy at all costs. The colonists were often forced to protect their ships and administer their own systems.[46] Recently, many poorer countries have accused the United States of just such exploitation. During the Iranian crisis attacks were made on the "criminal U.S. imperialism" and widespread reactions supporting statements such as these cropped up in Mecca, Pakistan, Turkey, Bangladesh, and elsewhere. It seemed the Iranians would rather lose their supplies from the U.S. than give in to any American demands.[47]

Perhaps an even better example would be Mexico's reaction to bids for her newly discovered oil. The Mexicans felt that American officials tended to patronize their country as underdeveloped, and, during President Carter's visit to discuss the oil situation, they protested with signs that read "Carter, we are not for sale," and "Carter is coming to exchange oil for peanuts."[48] The Mexicans reacted to Americans as plunderers and bullies, and even at high levels of government this attitude persisted. According to the Mexican Foreign Secretary, "We would like to see the U.S. treat us as an adult country capable of managing its own affairs."[49]

Under the mercantilist system, there was often a certain confusion between real ends and monetary means. The mercantilists forgot the purpose of economic activity, to provide real goods to the consumer. Their export-import system simply detracted from the supply of consumer goods while building up a surplus of money.[50] This same error can be observed in each of the three policies described previously. Hamilton's plan decreased the buying power of the large agricultural community; Keynes placed his emphasis on curing unemployment, not increasing productive capacity, and his theory has continued into recent economic thinking. An expanding production of consumer products is, after all, the healthiest way to meet the needs of the populace.

No one of these three economic theories is entirely reminiscent of mercantilism, yet each bears a resemblance to this early system that merits investigating. The successes or failures of one of them cannot truly cast a reflection on any other, for the situations in which they arose were far from similar. It is difficult to judge whether Hamilton, Keynes, or the modern economists were correct in their beliefs or if a better solution to the difficulties faced by each of them could have been reached. They all reacted to the situations facing them in the manner they saw fit. Unfortunately, the systems devised by these economists had their faults. In particular, the emphasis on society as the determinant of economic policy instead of the individual could be cited as a major error in each. Under Hamiltonian, Keynesian, and recent policies, the American citizen was and is excluded more and more from the economic process.



In conclusion, the point can be made that no economic theory may ever be considered dead or obsolete. Mercantilism, itself, reappeared where it was least expected and exercised a profound influence on a society which would never have admitted to being mercantilist in any sense of the word. Times, governments, and peoples may change, but the patterns of man's economic activities appear to repeat themselves again and again.

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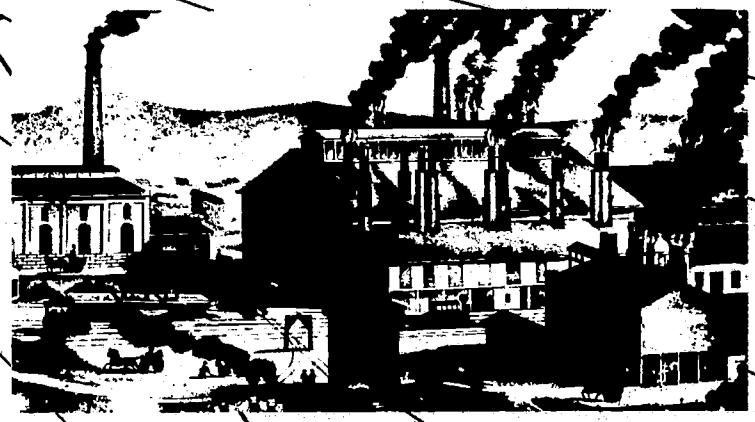


Planks for Industry

By William F. Farr

This is a story of a plank road built in the State of Missouri, and its effect on the surrounding area. I intend to show that because of this road, the mining industry developed quickly and so did the Mineral Area of Missouri.

Transportation, according to Rudyard Kipling, is civilization.[1] It is true that transportation facilities have always been a vital part of the development of industry. The plank road that was built between Ste. Genevieve and Iron Mountain was the only means by which industrialization came to the Mineral Area of Missouri as soon as it did. River transportation played only a secondary part in the development, and the railroads had not yet been brought into the area. Prior to the 1840s inland transportation of goods and raw materials throughout

Missouri was limited to mule and horse-drawn wagons over rutted, dirt roads. In good weather travel was difficult; in rainy weather or winter weather, travel was impossible.

In 1851, the Missouri General Assembly found it necessary to pass a general act laying down rules for the formation of road-building companies. These companies were allowed to use the right of eminent domain to acquire property. Forty-nine companies were authorized to build roads but only 17 actually did. Among these companies were the New Madrid and Stoddard Plank Company, the Charleston and Ohio City Plank Road, the St. Louis and St. Charles Turnpike Company, the Cape Girardeau Macademized Plank Road Company, and the St. Charles Plank Road Company.[2]

The longest plank road in Missouri, and possibly the world, was begun in 1851 and completed in 1853. This was the Ste. Genevieve, Iron Mountain and Pilot Knob Plank Road. On February 7, 1851, the Missouri Legislature passed an act incorporating the road company. This charter stated the regulations the company must follow. One unique regulation stated in the charter is:

> The stock of said company shall be free from all taxation, either by county or State, as long as the said company shall permit all officers, soldiers, arms, ammunitions, cannon balls, rail-road iron, granite or other materials for the use of the State of Missouri, to pass free from toll over said road.[3]

The route of the road is still in use today, but it is covered with modern day materials:

> For most of its length it is now Highway "W" from Iron Mountain on the western edge of St. Francois County, east through Farmington's main business district and then over Highway 32 from Farmington to Ste. Genevieve.[4]

It did not follow the existing Highway 32 exactly, however; it originally ran above the King's Highway for about five miles and then met Highway 32 at Weingarten.[5] The trip today is a two-hour drive, but travellers using a horse-drawn wagon on the plank road could expect the trip to last five days. Although five days seems to be a long time to travel, this road shortened the trip over the dirt roads between these two areas considerably.

Iron Mountain and Pilot Knob were two isolated areas producing iron ore and lead in Southeast Missouri. This mineral-rich land is located 44 miles from river landings at Ste. Genevieve and St. Marys on the Mississippi River and 100 miles south of St. Louis. The area was void of any satisfactory transportation. Delivering products and receiving supplies were dependent upon the well-rotted wagon trails. Due to the weight of the products shipped (iron and lead), the wagons often became bogged down in mud and were unable to complete the journey. Any shipments along the trail had to be planned with ect to the seasons. Even then inclement weather could hold up wagons for a week or more. Some new form of road construction was needed, and in 1851 Joseph E. Sauer issued 300 shares of stock valued at $50 each for the construction of a plank road. With $15,000 from stock issuance for construction, James P. Kirkwood was hired as chief engineer for the project.[6]

Construction of a plank road was not difficult. Long timbers were cut, split lengthwise, and three were laid parallel on the cleared right-of-way. Across these timbers, at right angles, were nailed 8-foot-long planks which were 2½ to 4 inches thick. Handmade, four-sided nails were used to attach the boards to the sills. Materials were easily obtained from the densely-wooded Missouri countryside.

Turning-off places were provided for two-way traffic as the road was only eight feet wide and it was impossible for two wagons to pass. The east-bound traffic had the right-of-way. Saw mills were built along the road to replace broken and rotted timbers. Three selling points of these roads were economy of construction, ease of maintenance (later disproved), and all-weather serviceability.

Maintenance of the plank road was paid for in the form of tolls. There was a total of seven toll gates stretching from one end of the highway to the other. Travelling east to west the first toll was paid at Ste. Genevieve. The next toll gate was at the west side of Weingarten and two more were located on each side of Farmington. The fifth gate was located on the south side of the St. Francois River. Pilot Knob and Iron Mountain maintained toll gates for east-bound traffic on the road. There were many ways in which people tried to beat the toll system. One method used was for a rider to gallop up on the tollkeeper's porch and go around the gate. Another way was to call out the name "Bill Hunt" as you approached the gate. A prosperous farmer who had many employees used to keep a tab at the toll gate for which a bill would be sent to Bill Hunt at the end of the month. As people heard of this practice they too would charge their toll to Bill Hunt by simply calling out his name. Mr. Hunt quickly stopped this procedure.[7]

Ore deposits at Iron Mountain and St. Francois County were thought to be inexhaustible. The American Iron Mountain Company sent loads of ore to the steamboat landings regularly during the months of June, July, and August. According to the company's Tally Book from 1852 to 1855, there were three shipments in April and May in comparison to

approximately three shipments weekly during the drier months. The average load shipped was 1,047 pounds at 25¢ per hundred pounds. (These fees were paid to the wagon driver.)

The plank road opened in 1853, and the Tally Book shows year-round notations of shipments showing an increase in the average size of the shipments to 4,500 pounds.[8] Because of the plank road more income came to the Mineral Area of Missouri.

Pierre Chouteau, James Harrison, and Joseph Valle, financiers from St. Louis, wanted to develop this area, and they knew the plank road offered an easier access to the mines. In 1854 their company, The American Iron Mountain Company, was doing so well that they added a furnace that used the hot blast method of producing iron. This was the first hot-blast furnace west of the Mississippi River. Prior to this time they used the cold blast method. With the hot blast method they could now produce pig metal and haul this in ox carts the 44 miles to Ste. Genevieve or St. Marys Landing.

Not far from Ste. Genevieve, along the plank road, was a town called Valle Forge. This town was 25 miles east of Farmington. It was built in 1853 to convert Iron Mountain pig iron into blooms—partially finished steel bars rolled into a small size for transportation to the river landings. This plant included four refinery forges and six catalans fires for making wrought iron directly from the ore. The weekly output of Valle Forge was said to be 40 tons of blooms produced from pig iron and 20 to 24 tons from ore. A charcoal industry developed in this town since a considerable amount of charcoal was used for the smelters. The town thrived until the Iron Mountain Railroad was completed in 1858. The ore was then taken directly to St. Louis.[9]

Large quantities of ore were hauled to Ste. Genevieve along the plank road for shipment to Cincinnati, Wheeling, and Pittsburgh by way of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. These shipments of iron from Ste. Genevieve in 1853 represented the total production of Pilot Knob, Iron Mountain and Valle Forge which amounted to 3,427 tons of pig iron and 895 tons of blooms. Of this 62 percent was sent up the Ohio River and 38 percent was sent to St. Louis. Adequate financing allowed the iron mines to operate at a profit, because stock piles could be maintained and shipped when the market price was up. Transportation on the plank road to Ste. Genevieve offered guaranteed delivery.[10]

The Iron Mountain plants had a tremendous effect on the industrial development of Missouri. A wholesale house at Ironton, which supplied the surrounding area with goods, did a very prosperous business. The plank road furnished the means of transportation for practically all the products used in this section until 1857.

Plank roads throughout the state of Missouri caused people to realize better transportation was needed. The plank roads were the cause of the new interests placed in the railroads of Missouri. As the mines of the Mineral Area became more prosperous, quicker delivery offered an incentive for construction of the railroad (The Iron Mountain Railroad) and stimulated the iron manufacturing in St. Louis.[11]

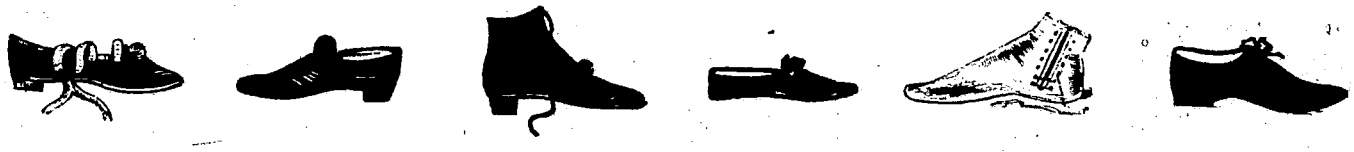
Costs and maintenance became too much, and the owners sold the road to Ste. Genevieve County and St. Francois County. Operation of the road continued under the counties' supervision. Although Ste. Genevieve County eventually closed their half of the road, St. Francois County continued the use of the road until 1903.

Travellers through the counties found the road useful. Farmers continued to haul their produce to market in the town of Farmington. Confederate troops also took advantage of the road while under the leadership of General Sterling Price. Price marched into the area with 9,000 troops and heavy artillery in an effort to storm the Union forces at Ft. Davidson at Pilot Knob.[12]

Although the Plank Road was only used for a short period of five years by the mining industry, the fact that it was there was the one reason St. Louis financiers decided to become involved as soon as they did. Transportation of the ore from the mines had been a very slow process, sometimes impossible. The Plank Road had been built; these men did not have the problem or costs of providing good transportation. As always, where there is work people will come. People did come to work in the mines. These people needed housing, food, and clothing; this stimulated more businesses in order to provide these services. Even after the railroad was built the road was still used to transport the needs of the people who settled here. Only after the planks either rotted or sunk into the mud did the road finally close down. It has been said that the lead mines began the development of the Mineral Area, but one wonders if it was not the Ste. Genevieve, Iron Mountain and Pilot Knob Plank Road.

NOTES

1. *Farmington News*, 19 June 1933, p. 9D.
2. The Columbia-Providence Plank Road was the last plank road built in Missouri. (John P. Stewart "The Old Plank from Ste. Genevieve to Pilot Knob" *The Midwest Motorist*, (April 1970) p. 7.
3. C.J. Rozier *An Act To Incorporate the Ste. Genevieve, Iron Mountain Pilot Knob Plank Road Company* Ste. Genevieve, 1851, p. 11.
4. John P. Stewart. "The Old Plank Road from Ste. Genevieve to Pilot Knob" *The Midwest Motorist* (April, 1970) p. 6.
5. Cyrus T. McCormick. "The Missouri Indian Trails" Western Historical Manuscript Collection, Rolla Missouri. (The King's Highway mentioned in the text refers to the El Camino Real which was first an Indian trail, then a Spanish road and now Highway 61.)
6. James P. Kirkwood was chief engineer of the Missouri Pacific Railroad and architect of the City of Kirkwood, Missouri which was considered to be the first planned suburban community west of the Mississippi River. (Jane Wilkinson Dahl. "A History of Kirkwood, Mississippi 1851-1965" *Missouri Historical Review* LX (July, 1966) p. 558.
7. John P. Stewart. "The Old Plank Road from Ste. Genevieve to Pilot Knob" *The Midwest Motorist* (April, 1970) p. 6.
8. *American Iron Mountain Company Tally Book 1852-1855*. 1 volume. Western Historical Manuscript Collection, Rolla, Mo. Microfilm RO3. pp. 1-3, 12, 23.
9. Arthur B. Cozzens "The Iron History of Missouri" *Missouri Historical Review* XXXV (July, 1941) p. 27.
10. Ibid.
11. J. Tom Miles. *Brief Authentic History of St. Francois County, Missouri*, Farmington, 1935, p. 27.
12. John P. Stewart, "The Old Plank Road from Ste. Genevieve to Pilot Knob" *The Midwest Motorist* (April, 1970) p. 13.



Rich's: A Shoe Store In Step

By David J. Risser

Over 115 years ago, Max Rich immigrated to the United States from Austria. In 1869 he opened a store which has developed and expanded for 113 years, yet remained under the ownership and management of a single family. The store is now one of only three or four shoe stores in the United States to be in business for this long under a single family.[1]

When Max reached the United States, he began learning about retail trade and shoes by working in a New York City women's store.[2] In September, 1869, he opened his own men's furnishings store at 1322 7th Street near O in Northwest Washington, D.C.[3] Once the business was established he sent for his brother, Louis, and father, Bernard. In 1894, they decided to open a shoe store catering to the entire family, the first

shoe store of its kind in Washington.[4] They moved into 1002 F Street and set up shop as B. Rich and Sons Shoes, named after the elder Rich, Bernard.

Six years later, the Richs contracted to have a four-story structure built across the street at 1001 F Street,[5] the northwest corner of 10th and F. They moved in November 1899. The city's famous Woodward & Lothrop department store was at that time located on the north side of the Rich building. The Woodies building eventually grew to nine stories and included the entire block with the exception of the Rich's store nestled in its southeast corner. Starting a family shoe store and locating on F Street are examples of the ability of the Richs to see trends before they happened and capitalize on them. Family shoe stores became the most popular, and F Street became the shopping district of Washington. In 1924 F Street was called "The Modern Shopping District."[6]

The elegant new store featured ten display windows and was lauded by local newspapers as "one of the most important improvements yet to this splendid thoroughfare (F Street)."[7] Before Rich's opened, fashion-conscious women had travelled to New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore to buy shoes and clothes.[8] The new Rich's gained popularity because fashionable women could view the latest in footwear while relaxing in a posh, salon-like store decorated with Oriental rugs and wicker furniture.

In 1904, Max's son Herbert J. Rich joined the B. Rich's firm to become the third generation Rich to run the store. He began by helping around the office and became president in 1924, at the age of 37. As the store became more famous, Herbert's customers included President Theodore Roosevelt, who bought hunting boots from Rich's,[9] President Truman,[10] Warren G. Harding,[11] and other government officials. Herbert was largely responsible for the installation of air conditioners, to make Rich's the first multi-story air conditioned store in Washington.[12] In fact, Herbert managed to get air conditioners in the same year the Supreme Court did in the 1930's.[13]

While all of this had been going on, F Street, the business district that Max Rich had decided to move to, had become known as Washington's principal shopping street.[14] F Street was one of the first streets in D.C. to be accessible, first by horse-car, then by street-car and auto.[15] It was the first location of large office buildings in the city, most notably the federal offices.

Retail business in Washington as a whole has always been reported as being very stable and most always on the increase. Between 1920 and 1928, the D.C. population rose 26 percent, the largest rise in the East.[16] Retail sales jumped 32 percent during the same period.[17] A business boom in 1929 was [illegible]d by depression. Economists agreed that Washington did not suffer as much as the rest of the nation, as unemployment here was low and salaries were high.[18] However, it is possible that these descriptions ignored Washington's black residents. In 1931, it was found that Washingtonians were the best spenders in the United States, each spending an average of $681 annually.[19] One D.C. businessman said, "never in my business experience have I seen ahead of me such a prosperous city as from the outlook today. Without question this is the most outstanding city in the United States, and probably the world."[20]

Frank Rich, the current Chairman at Rich's, disregards these wonderful observations, saying that the Richs and other businessmen have seen some very hard times. The increased sales statistics do not apply to his store, he says, because the gains of department stores would overpower Rich's losses. He and other businessmen also face unique problems in the F Street district.[21]

Herbert Rich's son, Frank H., joined Rich's on February 14, 1949. In August of 1953, Rich's opened a branch store at 1516 Wisconsin Avenue. This store is located in Georgetown, which at the time was beginning to undergo a renaissance. Again, Rich's had seen a trend before it developed and Georgetown became increasingly popular. The Georgetown store carried only women's informal low heel shoes, the first store of its kind.[22] The selection of these women's styles was so large that the Georgetown store was opened partly to take some pressure off the F Street store.[23]

In the 1940s, businesses began moving out of the downtown business district to outlying areas as the suburbs became large residential areas. In one year it was estimated that 5,000 new houses would be built in the city, while 25,000 would be built in the suburbs.[24] The extreme increase in automobile use in the post WWII period caused people to want to drive away from the city to shop in a spacious mall. The downtown had a decline in customers, earnings, upkeep, and reputation.[25] To correspond with this growth, on January 30, 1956, Rich's opened a new store at 76 Wisconsin Circle, just feet outside the District line in Chevy Chase, Maryland. Frank says he saw enormous potential in opening a store where no other shoe stores were and where houses were being built.[26] The transportation situation downtown also was deteriorating.

Transportation difficulties in the congested F Street area have long been a problem of local businesses. All five of the intersections reported to be the busiest in the city in 1925, were within four blocks of Rich's.[27] A 1944 study recognized a growing transportation problem in the old downtown in the 1930's, which would resume when the war ended. The study said, "the day of reckoning cannot be long postponed. It is inevitable that ultimately there will be a serious loss of business to merchants in the central area. Merchants will be tempted to abandon the heart of the city and move to outlying areas."[28]

Federally-mandated desegregation in the 1950's gave blacks the opportunity to shop in stores they had been barred from before. Enforcement of this law, however, was often contradictory. Rich's was one of the first, if not the first, retailer to hire a black salesperson who helped the customer to a greater extent than just handing him something.[29] Mr. Rich recalls that this was in the early 1950s. He also says that Rich's allowed black customers before a law was passed. He claims this was not advertised, but sent subtle messages to the black community. He says that hiring a black salesperson presented a unique problem at first because a shoe salesperson must help people on with their shoes and thus have physical contact with the customer's foot. In some instances, customers would refuse to have shoes fitted by a black salesman.[30] This fairness by the Richs earned them much praise from the black community as well as praise from members of the white community. Today, more than half of Rich's employees are black.[31] There are black managers and blacks who have been with the firm for over 20 years, some of whom moved from menial to managerial positions.[32]

The Richs have prided themselves on their community involvement. Herbert served as the President of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association, the treasurer of the Better Business Bureau, and served on the Citizens Committee for the United Nations. He was constantly praised for his tireless efforts in business, religious, and civic organizations.[33] As well as serving on most of the organizations Herbert belonged to and others, Frank Rich has fought hard to keep the F Street district intact. He helped initiate the lawsuit to save the historic Willard Hotel and won.[34]

On June 19, 1961, the Rich's store in Chevy Chase burned down. It was ready to reopen in August, the same month that Rich's left their building at 10th and F, where they had been for 60 years. They moved their main store to 1321 F Street between 13th and 14th Streets, after having $100,000 in renovations done.[35]

Business flourished in the next six years while racial tensions grew over civil rights.[36] Rich's opened a store in 1968 on Connecticut Avenue in the new business district where many new buildings were going up. Frank says he opened this store because of what was sure to become an excellent location partly due to the subway system which was being planned at the time. He was also worried about the deterioration of the old downtown and knew it was detracting from his business. The Connecticut Avenue store was stocked with more conservative shoes because there were more whites in that area and more professional people, like lawyers,

who had to dress conservatively.[37]

In the 1960's, riots began in American cities to protest racial discrimination. In Washington, discriminating stores were picketed and rallies were held. On April 4, 1968, Dr. King was assassinated. Within hours of the press releases announcing his death from a white gunman, Washington, D.C. erupted. The infamous D.C. riots of 1968 had begun. Angry mobs rampaged through the streets of Washington, looting and destroying. In a period of three days, buildings were destroyed, and the old downtown, among other areas, was devastated.

By all accounts, and there were many, 20,000 people rioted in April in Washington. A conservative estimate of the damage was $24 million. Ironically, looters ignored other stores in the 1300 block of F Street, and looted Rich's and one other because they had black patronage and were familiar. Rich's was popular among certain groups of blacks, particularly the juvenile "block boys" who could be found standing on street corners or sitting around all-night laundromats.[38] Frank Rich says business has still not improved to match the business before the riots.[39] The Richs have been commended for remaining in the riot district.

At the same time, Metro subway construction began and the little parking space before the construction was gone. This, combined with the absolutely devastating effects of the riots, drove many businessmen out of the area and ruined others. Metro construction, originally devastating, has given way to increased traffic in the old downtown area and the popularity of the subway has brought customers.

In 1969, Herbert and Frank Rich celebrated Rich's 100th Anniversary. Herbert was then 82 and still served as Chairman of the Board and Treasurer. Frank assumed ultimate responsibilities when Herbert died. Frank Rich looks for more promise in the future with the opening of D.C.'s Convention Center and a few new hotels within one block from his downtown store. The National Press Building offices also are being remodeled. He says he will continue to work toward the revitalization of the historic F Street business district.[40]

NOTES

1. Frank Rich, Personal Interview, Washington, D.C., April 16, 1982.
2. *Footwear News*, October 15, 1954, page unknown, (Rich's scrapbook).
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Rider's Guide*, Washington, 1924 quoted in *Downtown Commercial Historic District Nomination*, March 1981, p. 8.
7. *Footwear News, op. cit.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. Secretary to T. Roosevelt, Letter to Rich's, February 19, 1909.
10. Harry S. Truman, personal letter to Rich's.
11. Estate of Harding (deceased), Payment to Rich's, February 19, 1909.
12. *Washington Star*, June 27, 1935, page unknown, advertisement by National Electrical Supply Co.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Don't Tear It Down, Inc., *Downtown Commercial Historic District Nomination* (Washington, March 1981), p. 9.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
16. Federal-American National Bank, *Outline of Business*, Washington, September 1929.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Washington Star*, August 31, 1930, page unknown.
19. *Washington Star*, June 22, 1931, page unknown.
20. Morton J. Luchs, Vice-President of Washington Real Estate Board, quoted in *The Washington Times*, February 24, 1937.
21. Frank Rich, Personal Interview, D.C., April 23, 1982.
22. *Washington Star*, August 2, 1953, Stock Page.
23. Rich, *op. cit.*, April 23, 1982.
24. *Washington Post*, May 24, 1947, page unknown.
25. Don't Tear It Down, Inc., *op. cit.*, p. 8.
26. Rich, *op. cit.*, April 23, 1982.
27. Public Utilities Commission, *Transportation Survey* (Washington, 1925), p. 178.
28. Engineers in cooperation with many departments and agencies, *Transportation Survey and Plan for the Central Area of Washington, D.C.*, 1944, p. 1-3.
29. Dorothy I. Wright, Personal Interview, May 18, 1982. Frank Rich, Personal Interview, April 23, 1982.
30. *Ibid.* (Both)
31. *Ibid.* (Both)
32. *Ibid.* (Both)
33. *Footwear News, op. cit.*
34. Rich, *op. cit.*, April 23, 1982.
35. *Washington Star*, August 22, 1961, page A 12.
36. Rich, *op. cit.*, April 23, 1982.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Ben Gilbert, et. at., *Ten Blocks from the White House* (New York: Praeger for the Washington Post, 1968).
39. Rich, *op. cit.*, April 23, 1982.
40. *Ibid.*

National History Day

Winners List 1982

HISTORICAL PAPERS—JUNIOR

First Place — Miriam L. Womack
Hoffman Middle School, Houston, Texas
Teacher: Susan Dom
"Pass the Salt, Please!"

Second Place — David Ross
Central Junior High, Ames, Iowa
Teacher: Barbara Baker
"Soper's Mill"

Third Place — Kristin Sinnock
Clay Junior High, Noblesville, Indiana
Teacher: Michael Wells
"The Generations that Childhood Bypassed"

HISTORICAL PAPER—SENIOR

First Place — Anne W. Mullen
St. Catherine's School, Richmond, Virginia
Teacher: Richard Trumbo
"Three Examples of Mercantilism in the History of the American Economy"

Second Place — William F. Farr
North County High School, Bonne Terre, Missouri
Teacher: H. Crenshaw
"Planks for Industry"

Third Place — David J. Risser
Woodrow Wilson High School, Washington, D.C.
Teacher: Bruce Pendleton
"Rich's: A Shoe Store in Step with History for 113 Years"

INDIVIDUAL PROJECT—JUNIOR

First Place — Chris Moore
J.F. Kennedy School, Dubuque, Iowa
Teacher: Paul Kirkegaard
"Coal: America's 'Black Gold' "

Second Place — Tinsley Todd Hicks
Marietta Middle School, Marietta, Oklahoma
Teacher: Helen Banks
"101 Legacy: Trade and Industry"

Third Place — Joe Brooks
J. Findlay, Ohio
Teacher: Kevin L. Bright
"What Is Findlay Glass?"

INDIVIDUAL PROJECT—SENIOR

First Place
Deborah Ward
John F. Kennedy High School, Merrick, N.Y.
Teacher: Richard J. Daoust
"Queens County Agricultural Fair"

Second Place
Kent Hamilton
Frenship High School, Wolfforth, Texas
Teacher: Betty Donaldson
"Eternal Energy: Industry Harnessing the Sun"

Third Place
Norm Tribe
Powell Junior High, Littleton, Colorado
Teacher: Mr. Gibbons
"Colonial Water Wheel"

GROUP PROJECT—JUNIOR

First Place
Jeannie Pegg, Carol Fox
Marshall Elementary School, Marshall, North Carolina
Teacher: Don Banks
"Contributions and Controversies of a Small Town Industry"

Second Place
Sean Bryan, Mark Ainsley, Peter Kim
Incarnation School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Teacher: Anne Marie Kelly
"McHugh Brothers: An American Dream Becomes a Reality"

Third Place
Stefi Lefko, Andrea Thompson
Murray Junior High, St. Paul, Minnesota
Teacher: Michael Schmidt
"Fur Trade on the Great Lakes"

GROUP PROJECT—SENIOR

First Place
Kerry McGill, Dana Hankins
Marietta High School, Marrietta, Oklahoma
Teacher: Helen Banks
"The Great Iron Horse"

Second Place
Cleo Reed, Mel Williams, Gayle Poteet, Laurie Hargio, Shelley Scott
Galena High School, Galena, Kansas
Teacher: Trudy R. Jenkins
"Galena: The Lead and the Town"

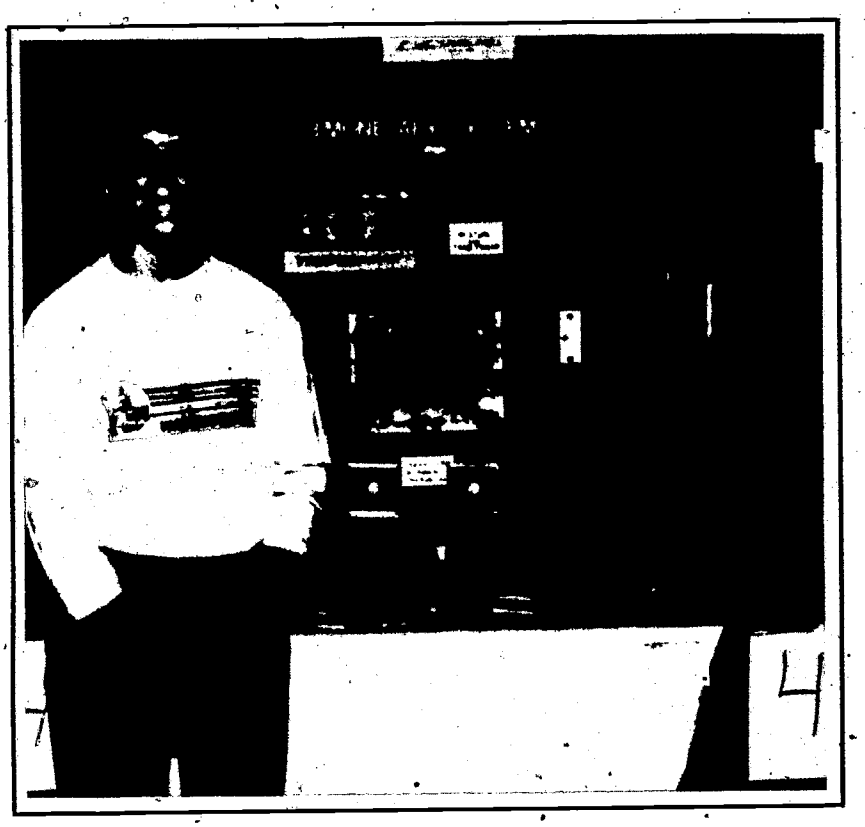
Third Place
Mary Chavous, Robin L. Hajslip
Butler High School, Augusta, Georgia
Teacher: Terri Blair
"How Agriculture Promotes Trade"

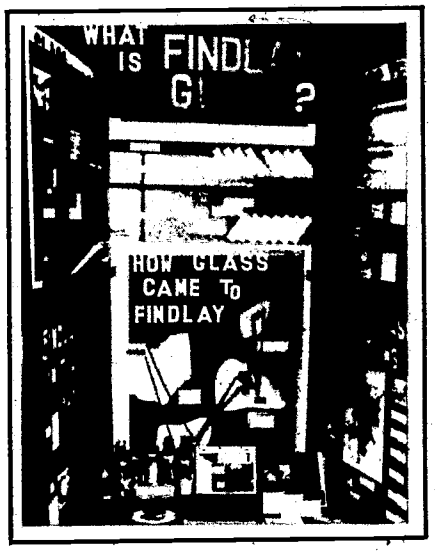
MEDIA—JUNIOR

First Place
Lucinda K. Schmeckel
Lincoln Elementary School, Beatrice, Nebraska
Teacher: Phyllis Poulain
"Great Warriors of the Plains"

Second Place
Lisa O'Tero, Jennifer Aylsworth, Dawn Eiswerth, Dawn Mozeleski
St. Gabriel School, Mentor, Ohio
Teacher: Sharon Koeth
"The Rise and Decline of Fairport Harbor, Ohio"

Third Place
Charlene A. Touvell
Brookville Area High School, Brookville, Pennsylvania
Teacher: Elizabeth Clowney
"Making History '57' Ways"





MEDIA—SENIOR

First Place — Joseph G. Gieber
Red Cloud High School, Red Cloud, Nebraska
Teacher: Sally Meyers
"The Wheel of Fortune: The Paddlewheeler Enriches the Mississippi"

Second Place — Hilda Rothstein, Lisa Schwartz, Marci Hecker, Alice Berman
Hewlett High School, Woodmere, New York
Teacher: Barry Beerman
"Riding Through the Years on the Long Island Railroad"

Third Place — Edward Kim, Chris Hill, Roman Mica
Hinsdale South High School, Darien, Illinois
Teacher: Robert Anderson
"Selig and Essanay: The Chicago Film Industry"

INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE—JUNIOR

First Place — Jenny Ingram
Greendale Middle School, Lawrenceburg, Indiana
Teacher: Earl Mann
"Papa Henry's Model Son 'T'."

Second Place — Brent Mitchell
Winterset Middle School, Winterset, Iowa
Teacher: Steve Corkrean
"The American Pork Industry"

Third Place — Sean Sheely
Hayes Junior High School, Youngstown, Ohio
Teacher: Janice Zorman
"Robots in the Gray Flannel Suit"

INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE—SENIOR

First Place — Christine Wilson
Hobart Senior High School, Hobart, Indiana
Teacher: Mary Collins
"The Connection: William Boyd Owen and the Brickies"

Second Place — Gretchen Ahrens
Chadron High School, Chadron, Nebraska
Teacher: Keith Walton
"The Bordeaux Trading Post"

Third Place — Amy C. Etheridge
Columbia High School, Columbia, North Carolina
Teacher: Mrs. Van Horn
"The Devil's Triangle"

GROUP PERFORMANCE—JUNIOR

First Place — Barb Bena, Michele Christensen, Lora Juguilon, Tammie McCune, Maria Sevel
Albion Middle School, N. Royalton, Ohio
Teacher: James Monhart
"The Endless Workroom"

Second Place — Ricky Leff, Jonathan Lunitz, Kit Hoover, Randal Harkins, James Holland
Montgomery Elementary School, Atlanta, Georgia
Teacher: Virginia Burke
"The Phoenician Journeys West"

Third Place — Darby Sloss, Kelly Christensen, Bridget Flanery, Michelle Kuster
Guthrie Center Elementary School, Guthrie Center, Iowa
Teacher: Connie Myers
"Modern Meets Medieval"

GROUP PERFORMANCE—SENIOR

First Place
Greg Presley, Lana Cooper, Dawn Gaily, Steve Gilbert
Stroud High School, Stroud, Oklahoma
Teacher: Thelma McCammon
"Trade: Tunes Reflecting a Depression Era"

Second Place
Cara Hansen, Craig Upright, David Owen, Peter Moore, Tom Veissman
Lincoln East High School, Lincoln, Nebraska
Teacher: Randall McCutcheon
"Agora-mets Delight"

Third Place
Robert Zoppa, Mary Jo Morrison, Maureen Murphy
Hillcrest School, Country Club, Illinois
Teacher: F. E. Higgins
"Julius Rosenwald: The Innovator of Sears Roebuck's Retail Merchandising"

SPECIAL AWARDS

WASHINGTON WORKSHOPS SCHOLARSHIP

Robert Jenson, Gary Hall
El Dorado High School, El Dorado, Arkansas
Teacher: Patricia Strickland

WOMEN'S HISTORY (FROM NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN)

Melissa McFee
Gallatin R-V, Gallatin, Missouri
Teacher: Nita Cragg

Salli Sides
Welcome Elementary School, Welcome, North Carolina
Teacher: Martha Rowe

LABOR HISTORY (FROM AFL-CIO)

Kelli Williams, Wendy Mall, Douglas Bower, Stacey Perkins, Adrienne McGonigle
St. Peter's Junior High School, Joplin, Missouri
Teacher: Ramona Chrisman

BYZANTINE HISTORY (FROM DUMBARTON OAKS)

Mathew Giacobbe
Montegomery High School, Skillman, New Jersey
Teacher: Barbara Wear

GREEK HISTORY AND CULTURE (FROM GOVERNMENT OF GREECE)

Matthew Giacobbe
Montegomery High School, Skillman, New Jersey
Teacher: Barbara Wear

Cara Hansen, Craig Upright, David Owen, Peter Moore, Tom Veissman
Lincoln East High School, Lincoln, Nebraska
Teacher: Randall McCutcheon
"Agora-mets Delight"

Kristin Switala
Whitehall Intermediate School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Teacher: Harry Ford

Karen Maistros
Montville High School, Oakdale, Connecticut
Teacher: Mr. Latman

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