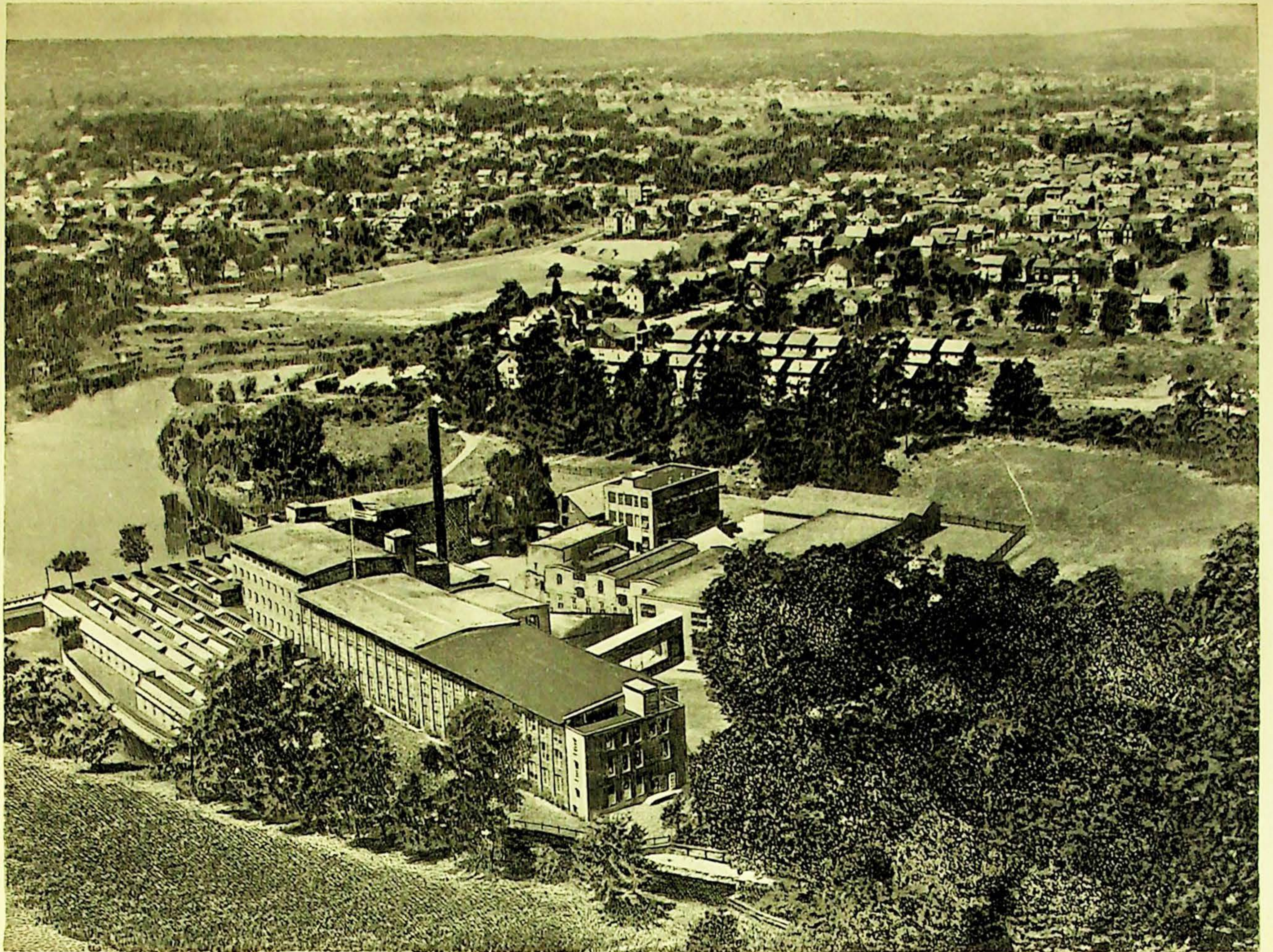

THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

THE RECORD OF THE HOUSE
OF THOMAS OAKES AND COM-
PANY AS THEIR CENTENNIAL
ANNIVERSARY IS CELEBRATED

1830-1930

Prepared and Privately Printed for
THOMAS OAKES AND COMPANY

BY
THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
1930



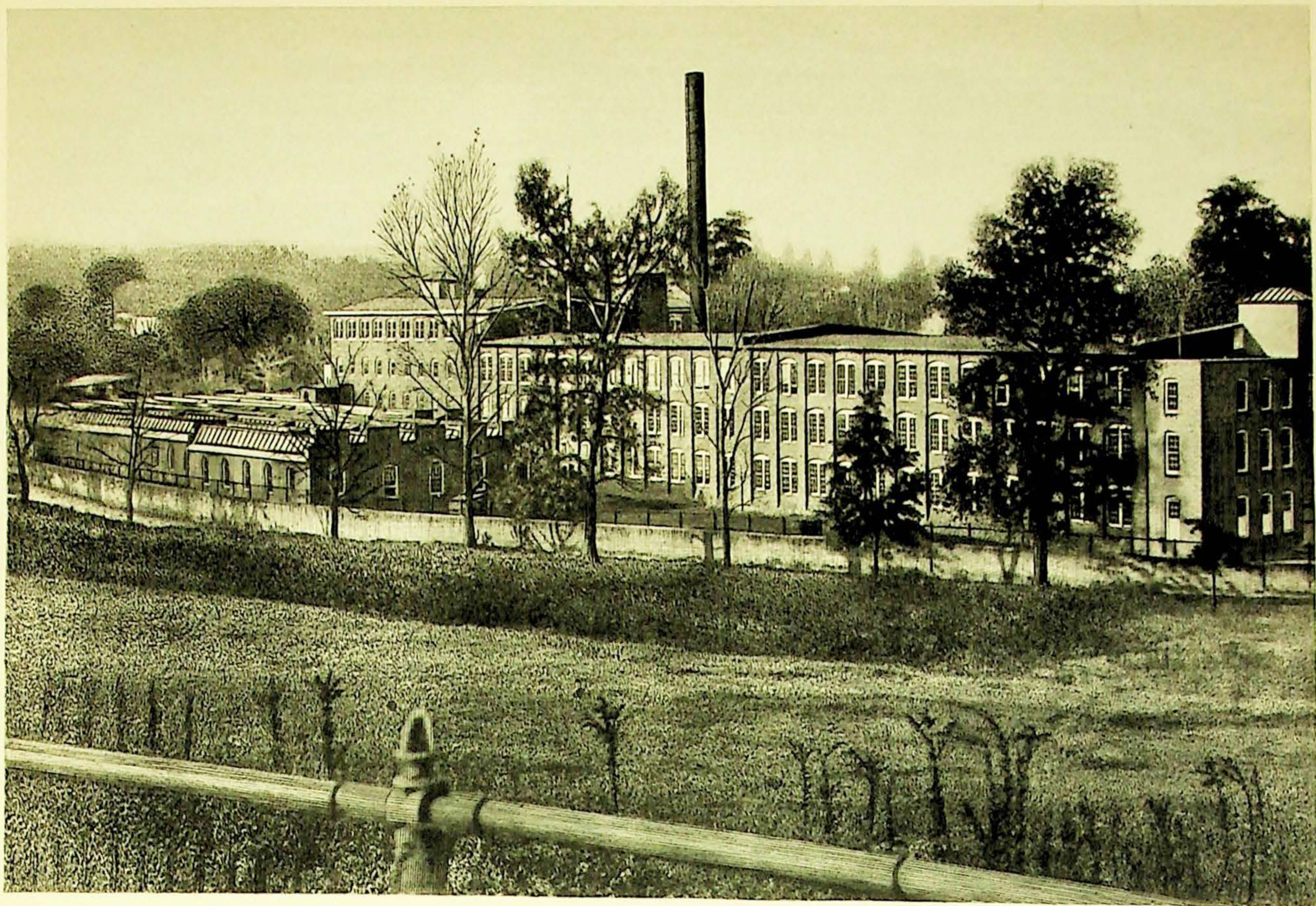
FOREWORD

“For the purpose of collating the important points in the establishment and prosecution of the business of the late David Oakes, special care has been taken to gain such facts as are hereinafter to be found and which may be considered as accurate as research and diligent inquiry have enabled us to attain.

“Believing the business has been thoroughly established and hoping those who may be called upon to carry forward with increasing success an establishment that is the result of so much perseverance, hard work, strict integrity and wise forethought as were shown by its founder, these incidents and facts, relative to the establishment and growth of the business, are here recorded in such manner as may be gratifying to those who may follow as its successors.

HENRY P. DODD.”

This is the foreword written by Mr. Dodd (1836-1917) in a book of historical memoranda kept by him. The fortunate preservation of these facts made possible the present narrative.



Engraved by Lamson New York

PRESENT MILL OF THOMAS OAKES & CO. 1927
SUCCESSORS TO D. OAKES & SON

THE TURN OF THE CENTURY



THE quotation set forth on the preceding page introduces a descriptive narrative of a business and an institution that is representatively American in the broadest sense and yet entirely local. This apparent contradiction is achieved by the woolen manufacturing firm of Thomas Oakes and Company, with a plant that for one hundred years has been established in Bloomfield, New Jersey, making a product that has been nationally distributed. It is in celebration of this centennial anniversary that this booklet is prepared, to greet the circle of friends that has been constantly widened as the years have passed, to meditate upon the happenings and developments that have taken place, and to sight, if possible, the course and the goal ahead.

BACKGROUND.

In giving the comparative order of man's necessities, clothing ranks a close second to food, so that in the development of the mechanical genius of the race, the spinning of yarn and the weaving of fabrics came early. Wool, linen, and cotton were three natural products upon which primitive man could exercise his ingenuity in the art of

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producing cloth, and which of the three first commanded his attention and was made into raiment is a debatable question, which would be answered variously in accordance with climatic conditions. One delver into the subject dates the first weaving of fabrics many centuries B. C., and the testimony of all ancient records shows the great antiquity of woolen textures and the early importance of sheep.

Generally speaking, the art of woolen cloth making was brought to America by way of England, while the English were indebted to the Romans for their knowledge of weaving. The Romans did little more than formally introduce weaving into England and it required centuries of subsequent toil on the part of the Flemish, French, and Spanish to perfect it.

Domesticated sheep were first introduced in America at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1609, and in 1633, at Boston, Massachusetts. In 1643 a fulling mill was erected at Rowley, Massachusetts, a town named for the first family that undertook the making of woolen cloth in the American colonies.

It is not possible to trace here the full history of this branch of textile manufacturing in the United States, although in the narrative as told from 1830, there are contained all the essentials of the vast progress and titanic achievements made in the woolen trade in this coun-



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Eng. by Finlay & Co. n.

D. Currier

try, epitomized in this story of the operations of Thomas Oakes and Company under three generations of the Oakes family: David Oakes, the founder; his son, Thomas Oakes; and grandsons, David and George A. Oakes.

THE FOUNDER.

David Oakes was born January 13, 1809, in that part of the township of Bloomfield that is now Nutley. He was of English descent and his grandfather, John Oakes, was a resident of Ellastone Mills, Staffordshire, England. The family coat-of-arms bears the inscription: "The armorial bearings of John Oakes of Oundell, Co. Northampton and of Yaxley, Co. Huntingdon, extracted from the Visitation of Northampton, 1618."

David Oakes' father, Thomas Oakes, was a consulting engineer and millwright and came to America in 1802, becoming consulting engineer to the Philadelphia Board of Water Works and later superintendent of the Schuylkill Navigation Company.

In 1826 David Oakes took the first step toward the calling which he was to follow the rest of his life, a step that was to determine the vocations of at least two generations of his successors. In that year he went to Orange, New Jersey, to learn the trade of finisher of woolen goods in the mill of Joshua Smith. Rural conditions and rural designations of time prevailed, for he is described as

entering upon his apprenticeship “when the rye was in the head.” (It must have been an unusual season, for Mr. Oakes once said that the rye did not head again at that time of year until 1878, fifty-two years later.)

Upon the completion of his apprenticeship David Oakes embarked in business independently, and in 1830 the forerunner of the present system of mills was erected upon the present mill site.

THE WORK.

The excellency of woolen cloth depends upon the men behind the processes. It is their experience and skill that give character and reputation to the product. The founder of the Oakes Mills surrounded himself with men of thorough knowledge and comprehensive experience, skilled in each of the details that enter into the making of fine cloth, and had within his small mill a veritable aristocracy of technical talent. Their united work resulted in a product of superior quality that speedily gained recognition in the markets of the East and that created a demand insuring success. It is of interest to note that the starting of the Oakes Mills was approximately contemporaneous with the establishment of some of the noted New England mills, for the great Amoskeag Mills in Manchester, New Hampshire, were opened in 1820,

OAKES.

Arms—Gules, two lions combatant argent, a chief of the last, quartering, sable a fesse between six acorns or.

Crest—An oak tree vert fructed or, supported by two lions rampant argent. (Burke: "General Armory.")

Symbolic:

The shield is divided into four parts. In the first and fourth quarters the shield is red—in heraldry this denotes boldness, daring, blood and fire, "a burning desire to spill one's blood for God and country."

The jewel is the ruby.

The lions represent strength, courage and generosity and symbolizes these qualities in the armsbearer.

The chief indicates a head, a chieftain one who by his high merits has procured for himself chief place, love and esteem among his fellow men.

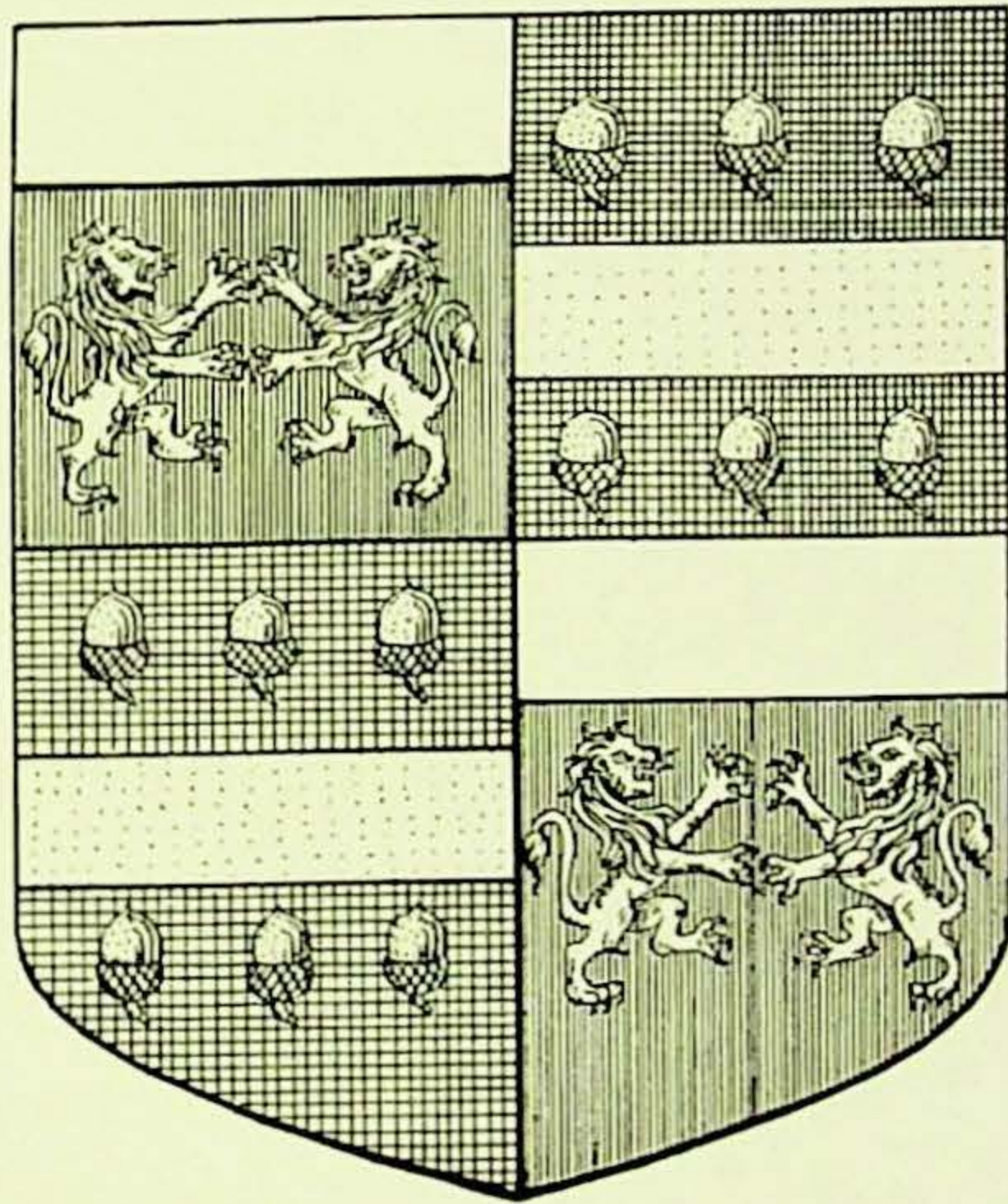
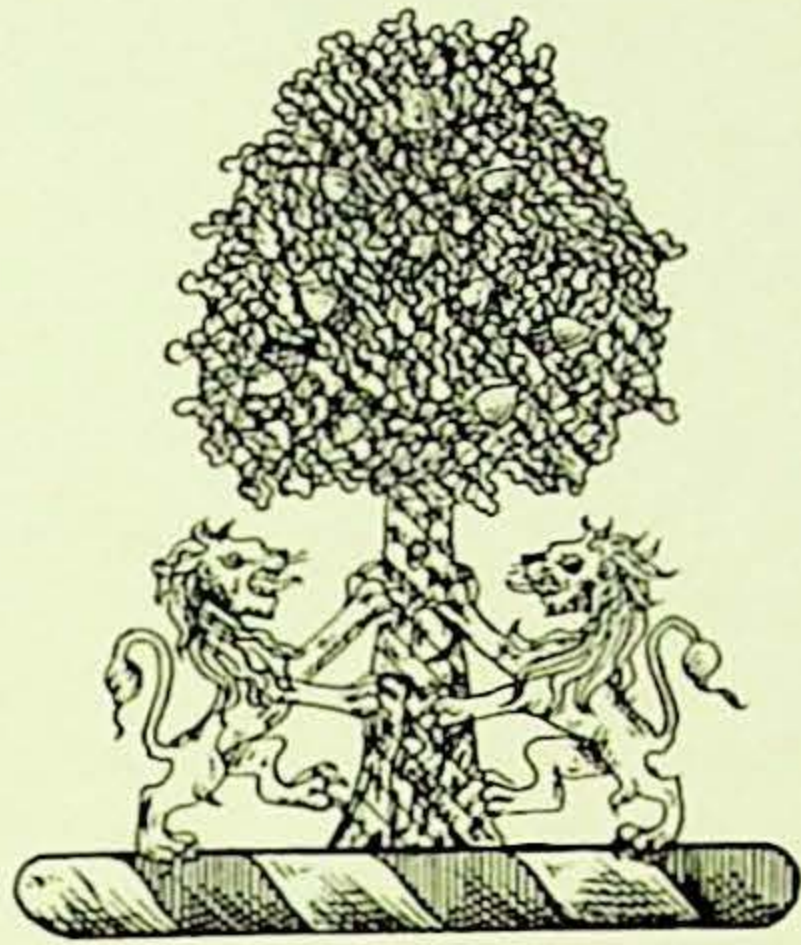
The second part of the shield is black—in heraldry this denotes grief, prudence and honesty.

The jewel is the diamond.

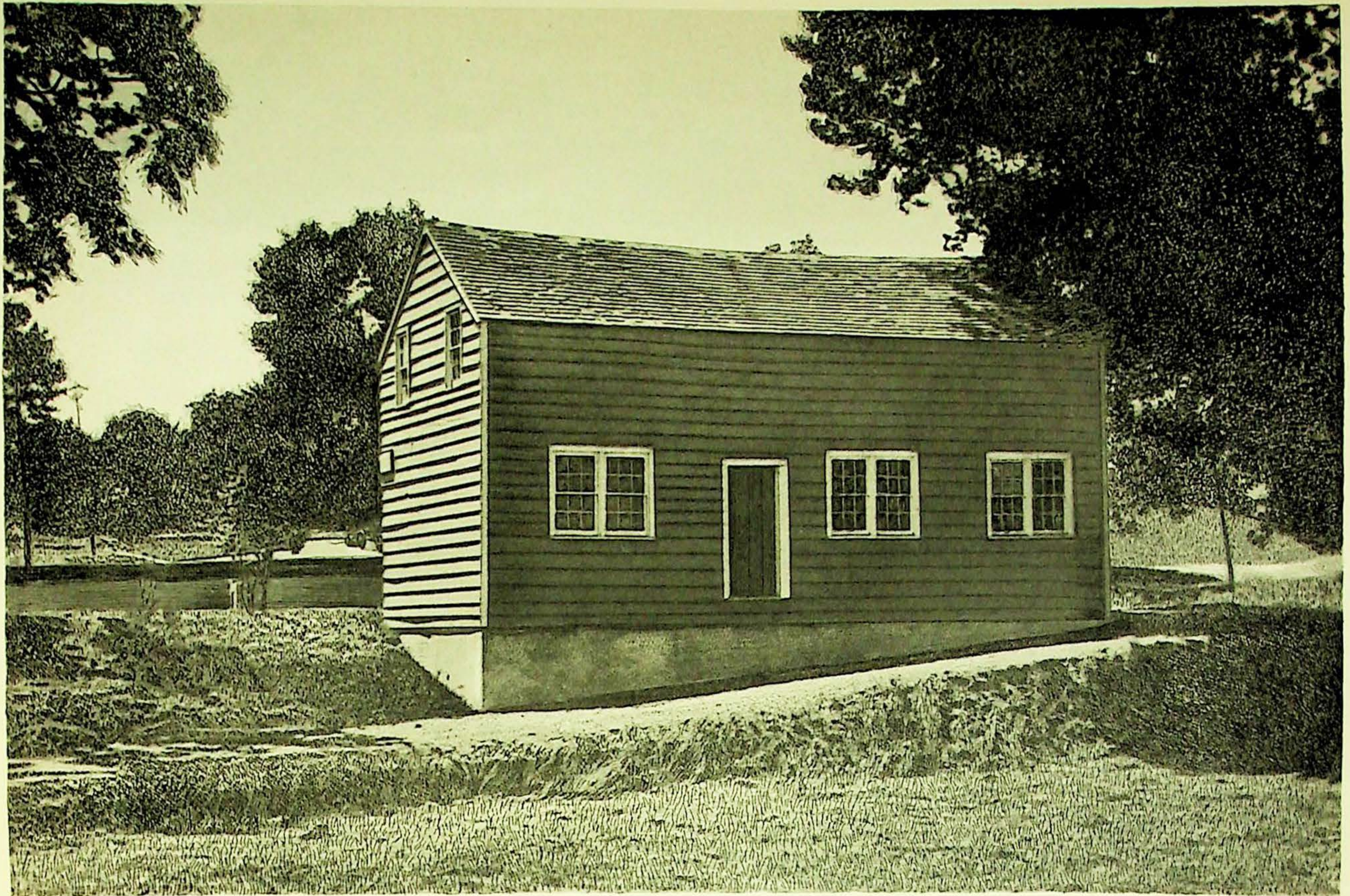
The fesse represents the belt worn over the armor by officials of rank at certain important court functions.

The acorns of the arms and the oak tree of the crest symbolizes antiquity, strength and long life.

The lions of the crest symbolizes the same as those in the arms.



Oakes



THOMAS OAKES & COMPANY
THE ONLY REMAINING ONE OF THE ORIGINAL MILL BUILDINGS, NORTH SIDE
ERECTED ABOUT 1830

—THE TURN OF THE CENTURY—

and the present Amoskeag Manufacturing Company in 1831.

FIRST BUILDING AND EQUIPMENT.

A frame building twenty-eight by thirty-two feet in dimensions does not seem an impressive beginning, yet such was the start made by David Oakes. Then, too, the eye untrained in the manufacturing needs of the time would have seen little of promise in the site chosen in Bloomfield, but Mr. Oakes discerned the possibilities of water-power afforded by the location, and time vindicated his judgment. In this building he installed one set of carding machines and four broad hand looms, and as operations began, he became a friendly competitor of the neighboring woolen manufacturers, the Joshua Smith Mills in Orange, New Jersey, where he had become a journeyman worker in wool, and the Duncan, Underhill and Stitts Mills in Nutley, New Jersey. The Oakes Mills are the only survivors of this little group. The new mill first turned out yarn and cloth for country wear and colored homewoven cloth for farmers' wives to make into articles of clothing, for the spinning wheel and the loom then had an important place among the domestic implements of the well-regulated household.

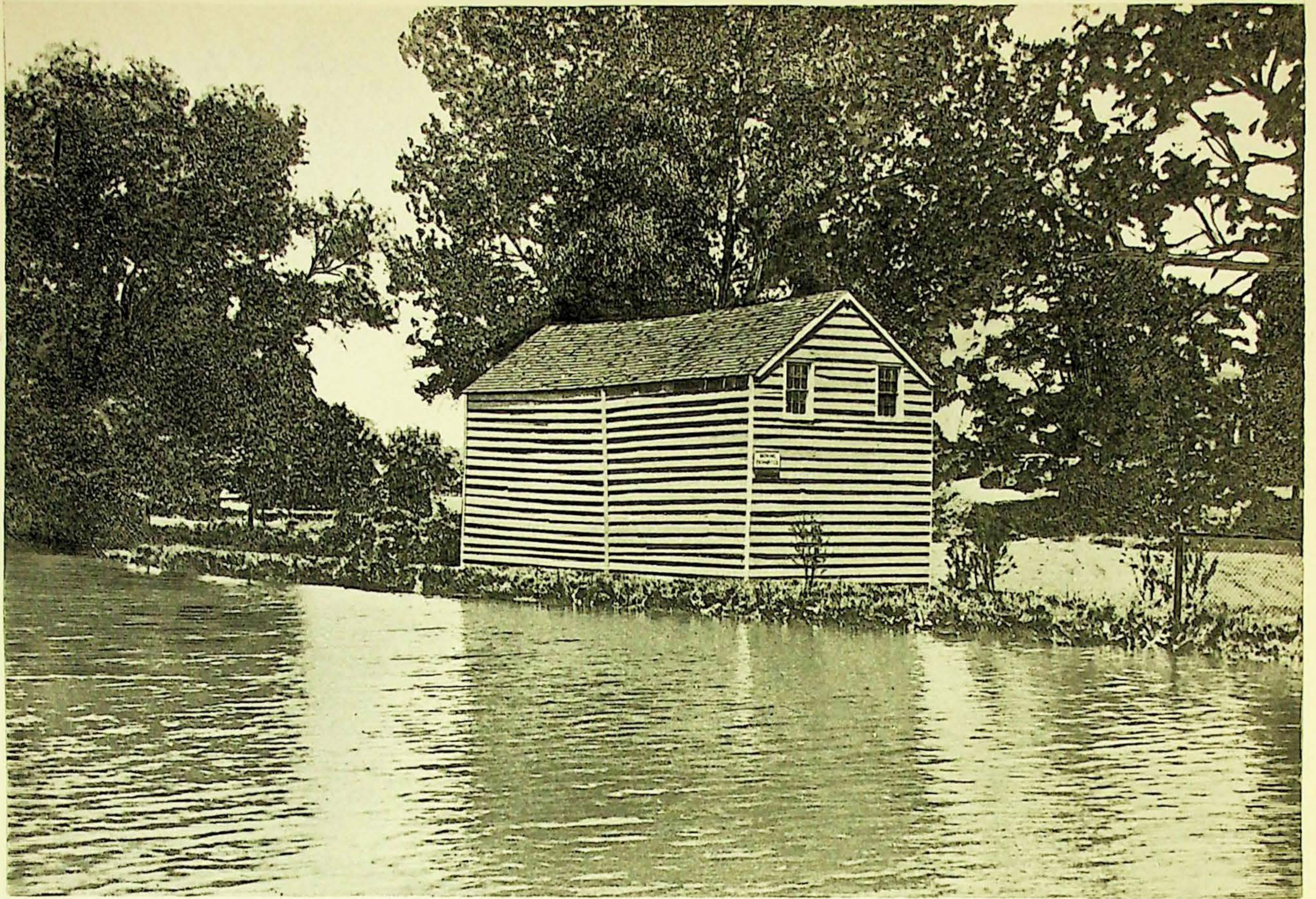
—THE TURN OF THE CENTURY—

MISFORTUNE.

On Sunday morning, May 22, 1836, the mill building, its machinery, and its stock, were destroyed by fire. The mettle of its owner is illustrated in its immediate rebuilding and the installation of improved machinery, comprising carding machines and power looms. At this time flannels became the chief product. In 1842 additional adversity was encountered in the form of financial embarrassment, and the history of the Oakes Mills contains no fairer page than that which tells of the manner in which a number of residents of Bloomfield demonstrated their faith in the enterprise and their confidence in its owner by assisting Mr. Oakes to make a satisfactory mutual agreement which, quickly effected, gave the business a new lease of life. Conspicuous among these friends was a former sheriff of the county, William Frame. The first profits were used to meet every dollar, in principal and interest of these obligations.

RAW MATERIAL AND PRODUCT.

The Scottish wool market had brought forth a well-wearing cloth of good appearance called tweed. The manufacture of tweeds was undertaken in the Oakes Mills so successfully that their reputation was augmented



THOMAS OAKES & COMPANY
THE ONLY REMAINING ONE OF THE ORIGINAL MILL BUILDINGS, SOUTH SIDE
ERECTED ABOUT 1830

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and a southern trade built up that continued without interruption until the outbreak of the War between the States.

Up to 1844 the wool supply of the mill came from sheep raised in the immediate vicinity and from New York City wool dealers. The mills were now operating on such a substantial basis and there was such a demand for their goods, that it was necessary to have access to a more extensive field of wool supply. The backing of cloth merchants in New York City, who saw a good future for the mills in the excellence of their products, enabled David Oakes to make personal contact with the big wool producing sheepmen in the West, and thus to get a choice of fine grades of wool. Mr. Oakes left home on his first wool buying adventure, May 29, 1844, and went by train to Baltimore, Maryland, thence by stage coach along the National Turnpike across the Alleghany Mountains, by way of Cumberland, to Washington, Pennsylvania. For that period it was a far western trip, requiring several days. At Washington he heard that Jacob Ulery, of Zollarsville, Pennsylvania, had a large quantity of wool for sale. Mr. Oakes hired the only buggy that could be procured in Washington, found Mr. Ulery, bought his wool, and laid the foundation of a friendship with the wool grower that lasted until Mr. Ulery's death in 1868. Mr. Oakes kept up his annual

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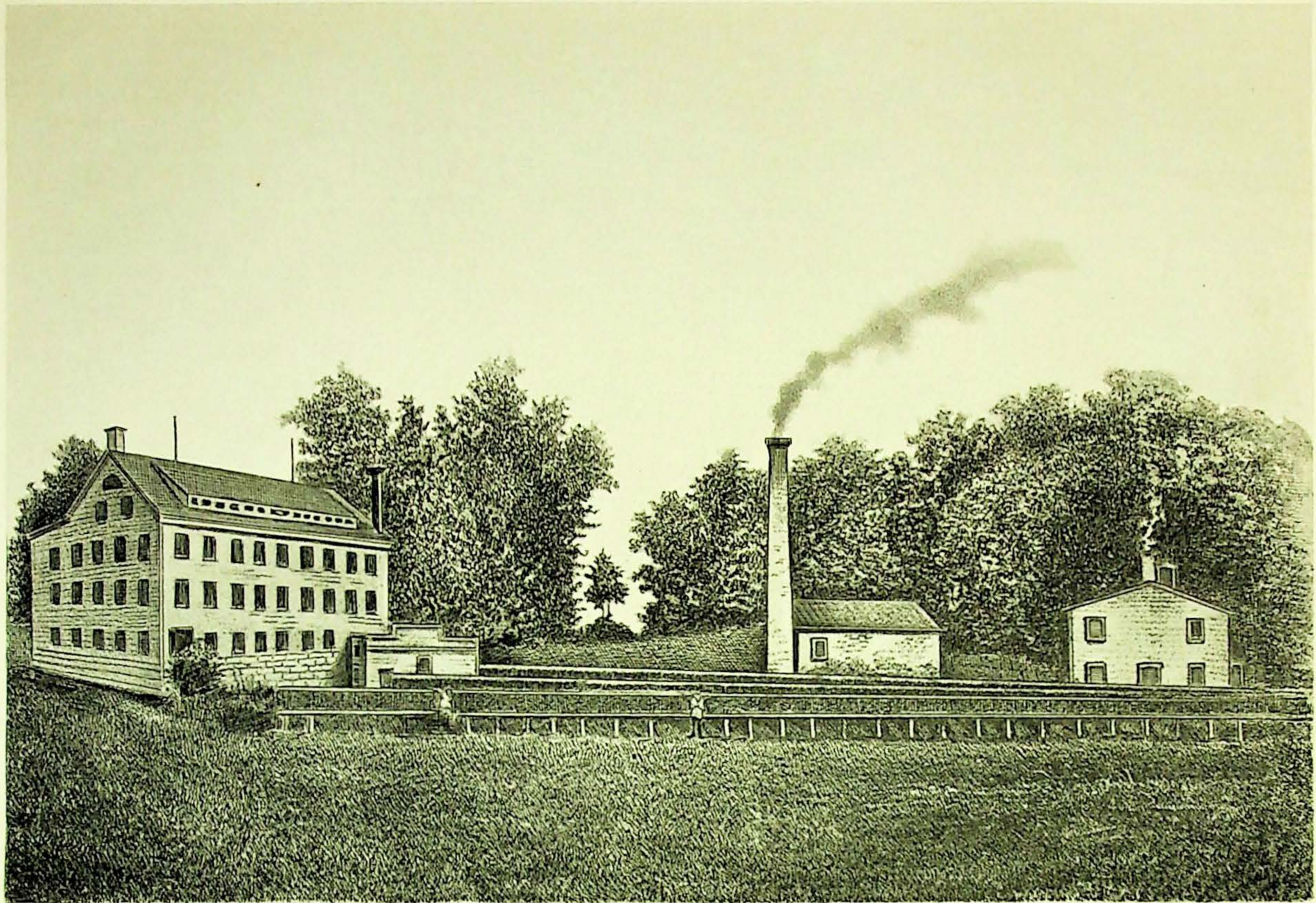
excursions among the wool growers until 1876, when Henry P. Dodd took up the journeys that carried him to Pennsylvania, Ohio, and beyond.

From 1830 to 1847, the sorting, scouring, drying and dyeing of wool was carried on in a building near the old pond. In 1847 a new dye house was built, the site of which is now occupied by the brick dye house. An addition was made to the south end of the dye house in 1879. A small upright steam boiler was used for dyeing and drying purposes up to 1856, when a boiler house was built.

Oil was used for lighting purposes in the mill until 1858, when a gas plant was installed on the mill premises and coal gas was produced for lighting the mill buildings. This was the first gas making plant in Bloomfield, and antedated the Montclair Gas and Water Company's plant on West Street by many years.

PROGRESS.

Business at the mills was steadily increasing and necessitated an enlargement of the buildings in 1849, when another set of carding machines was added to the equipment. The close of the first quarter century saw the mills firmly established and with a steadily increasing demand for their product.



D. OAKES' CASSIMERE MANUFACTORY, BLOOMFIELD, N. J. ABOUT 1855.

—THE TURN OF THE CENTURY—

1855-1880—*BEGINNING OF SECOND QUARTER
CENTURY.*

The second quarter of the century opens as a period of general expansion of American industry and of great migration of labor to America from England, Scotland, Ireland and Germany. Bloomfield received its share of that migration and not a few of these newcomers found employment in the Oakes Mills, where some of them spent the remainder of their working lives and where some of their descendants work today. Oakes' cloth had obtained a country-wide reputation for quality and was much in demand for uniforms for military purposes, and for police and fire departments. In 1860, the mills were again enlarged and a third set of carding machines added in 1861; another in 1864, making four sets in all. This equipment was adequate until 1873, when a new set of machines was placed in the carding room. Five sets of carding machines in operation in one room on the second floor made a busy scene and one that greatly impressed visitors at the time.

METHODS.

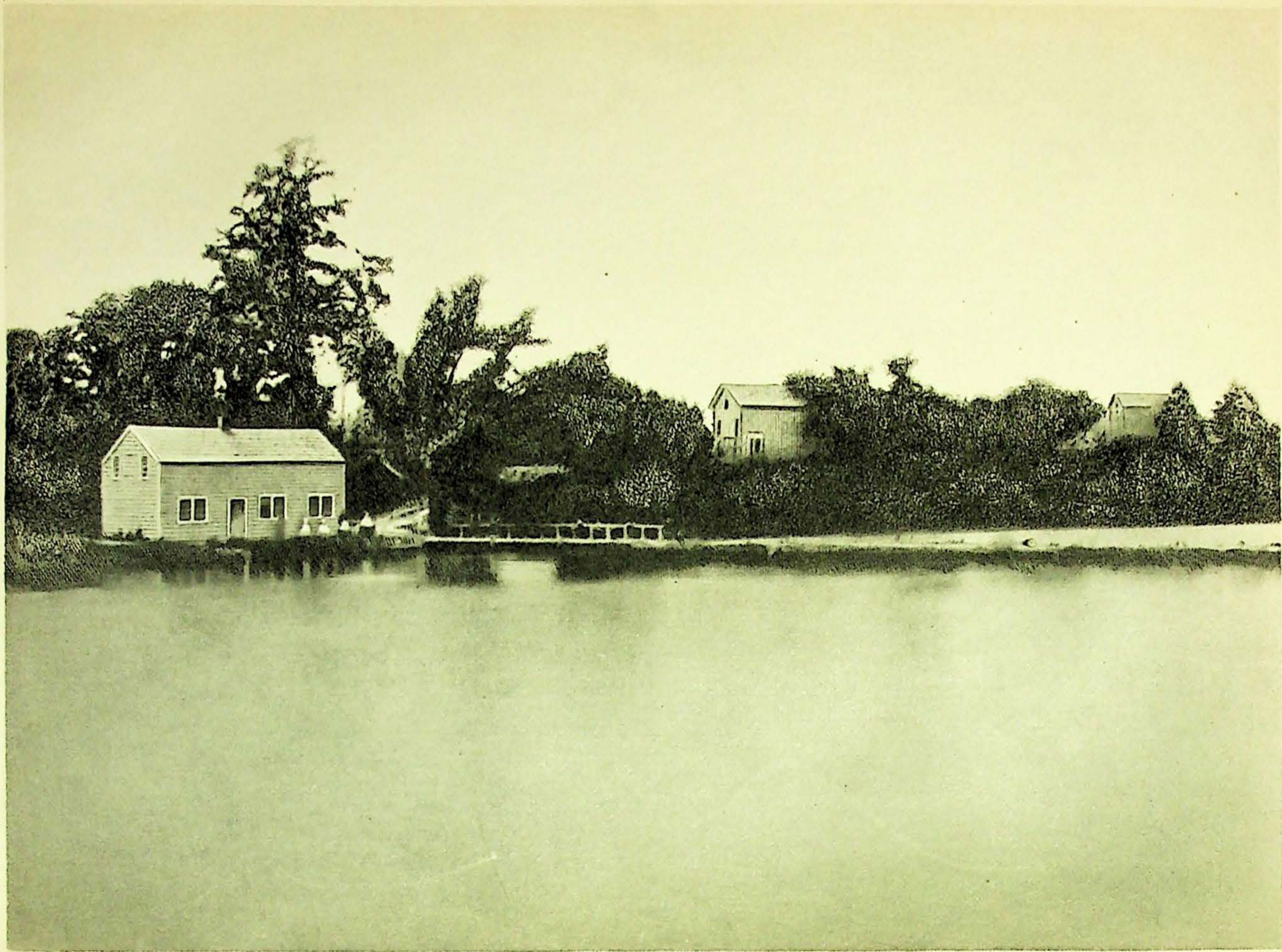
The spinning was done with hand jacks exclusively until 1868, when a pair of John Tatham's mules was placed on the third floor of the factory. The purchase of

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the Tatham machines was made by David Oakes while on a visit to England, where he gave considerable attention to the operation of woolen mills. He made an especially close inspection of the woolen mills in the Yorkshire district, where the best English cloths were produced. The information he gathered there was utilized in the general plan of a portion of the present weaving room, built in 1860. Until that time the mill had relied upon a water wheel for motive power, but the continuing enlargement of the plant naturally made increasing demand upon the source of power. The continuance of a sufficient water power was an uncertainty; steam engines were supplanting water wheels at this period; and a thirty-horsepower Corliss steam engine was added to the plant, evidence that the management of the mills was keeping pace with the modern improvements and the march of science. Water power was not discarded, however, and the old breast wheel was supplanted by a Boyden water wheel, which in turn was superseded by a forty-inch Leffell wheel.

THE POND.

With the growth of the town the mill pond became a sort of community property. It was much used for bathing and fishing in the summer and was, and still is, pop-



D. OAKES & SON
MILL POND AND WOOL SORTING BUILDING
1868

—THE TURN OF THE CENTURY—

ular for skating in the winter. The old mill pond constitutes an object lesson as a tie between two systems of motive power, and it may yet stand in close relation to the third and latest of the great motive powers, electricity.

MORE ON EQUIPMENT AND PRODUCT.

Up to the time of the removal to the new weaving shop in 1860, the looms were all narrow ones, excepting one old broad plain loom. The broad loom was employed for weaving roller cloths for cotton mill use, and this article was furnished to customers in many places. In 1861 two broad looms were bought in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and used for weaving six-quarter army flannels, which required no finishing, and also for weaving three-quarter cassimeres, the pieces being parted in the center for finishing.

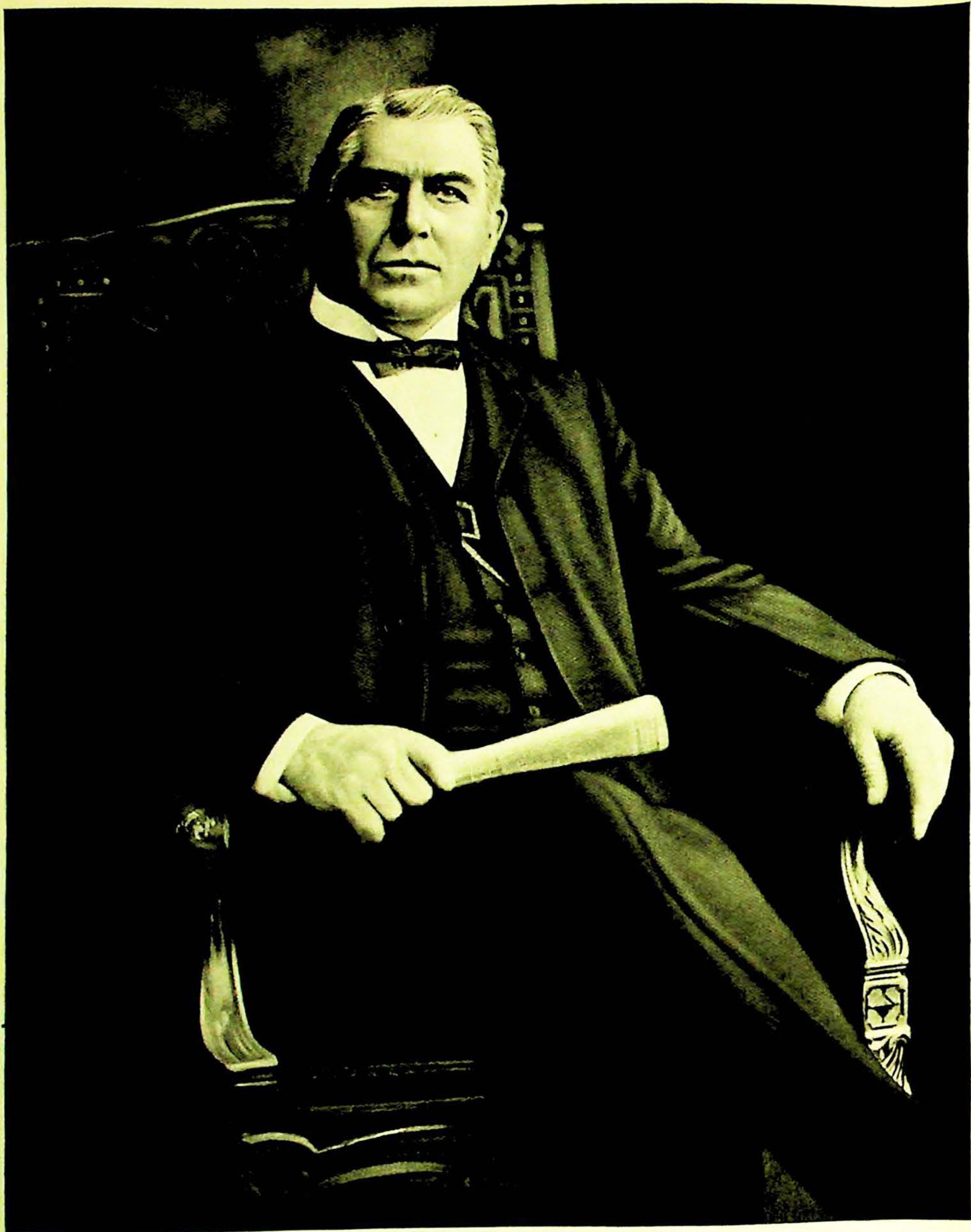
During the summer of 1865 four broad looms were purchased in Massachusetts, also a broad gig and a broad shearing machine. This new machinery was bought for making six-quarter blue beaver cloth for policemen's wear, which from that time became an important specialty, the doeskins of three-quarter width having been made some time previously. The steadily increasing additions to the machinery of the plant tell a convincing story of the growing business. Henry P. Dodd

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put on record an enumeration of the machines purchased for many successive years down to the period of which we write. It was as follows: 1867, two Crompton looms; 1868, two Duncan and one Furbush and Gage looms; 1869, two Crompton looms; 1871, three Crompton looms; 1874, two Crompton looms; 1875, two Crompton looms; 1876, four Crompton looms; 1877, six Knowles looms; 1879, ten Crompton looms.

In 1873 a three-story brick carding and spinning mill was added to the plant. The first sets of mules, the pair of Tatham mules and jacks, with a Davis & Furber self-acting head, were moved to the new building in 1874. Two additional sets of Davis & Furber cards, two pairs of Tatham mules, and one pair of Davis & Furber mules were added to the machinery. In 1879 another set of Tatham mules was added. A boiler house was built in 1877, where the machine shop later stood, and in the same year was supplied with two fifty-horsepower Corliss boilers, the best type then in use.

During the very severe winter of 1873 the wool house was moved across the pond on the ice to its present position on the north shore. This was done under the direction of Albert Morris. The office building was erected in 1875.



Thos. Cassin

—THE TURN OF THE CENTURY—

OFFICIAL PERSONNEL.

In the earlier years of his business, David Oakes was assisted in manufacturing by Marcus Baldwin. Later, Phineas J. Ward was associated with Mr. Oakes. Mr. Ward had been in the general store of Frame, Pierson and Conger, at the town center, recently known as John A. Cohane's store. Mr. Ward retired from the business in 1858, and in May, of that year, George A. Oakes, son of David Oakes, was admitted to the business, the firm name of D. Oakes & Son being adopted. In May, 1859, through the admission into the firm of Thomas Oakes, it became D. Oakes & Sons. Upon the death of George A. Oakes, December 24, 1861, the old company name was resumed. David Oakes died July 26, 1878, near the close of the first half century of the business which he had founded and made so successful, leaving it as a heritage to his descendants, under whose management it has continued to expand.

CIVIL WAR.

The Civil War brought very busy times to the mill and the plant was given over almost exclusively to making indigo blue army cloth, the first delivery of the sky blue goods being made May 7, 1861. William Duncan, of Franklin, New Jersey, and Henry B. Duncan, of New-

—THE TURN OF THE CENTURY—

ark, New Jersey, were employed to manufacture army goods for the Oakes company. The dyed wool was furnished to them from the Bloomfield mills, and the woven cloth was returned to be finished. By this arrangement the government was supplied with a large amount of cloth for soldiers' uniforms at a time when it was difficult to get indigo blue cloth. Large orders also were filled for dark blue for infantry coats and caps, also blue twill flannel for blouses. A very large portion of the cloth used for police uniforms throughout the United States at that time was made at Oakes Mills.

The manufacture of cloth suitable for policemen's uniforms began in the summer of 1865, first for the New York City Police Department. This cloth soon became widely known and all of the largest cities of the country are now using Oakes fabrics for policemen's uniforms.

LOCAL RELATIONS.

Oakes Mills were once famous for blankets of a very fine and durable quality, the essence of warmth and comfort which stood many years' wear. Nearly every home in Bloomfield at one time had one or more pair of Oakes blankets in its household equipment.

For many years the major part of the cloth produced by the Oakes Mills was transported daily to New York by

58

Treasury of the United States

Washington March 28th 63.

Gentlemen:

Your letter of March 26th is received.
Certificates of Indebtedness issued on or before March
3, 1863, bear interest payable in coin; interest on
all issued after March 3^d is payable by law in
U.S. Notes. Your first ^{interest} is payable in coin, your second in U.S. Notes.

Yours, respectfully,

F. E. Spinner

Messrs D. Baker & Son,
Bloomfield,
N. J.

—THE TURN OF THE CENTURY—

a local express enterprise, the Newark, Bloomfield and New York Express, under its different owners.

1880-1905—THIRD QUARTER CENTURY.

The third quarter century continues the story of increased business, necessitating the carrying of increased volumes of stock. Imported wools were being bought in large quantities, new mill machinery added from time to time was of a costly kind, and safe housing for stock and machinery became a question of paramount importance. In 1882 a brick stock house was built and in 1887 the mills were equipped with the Grinnell automatic sprinkler system, and a Worthington fire pump. New machinery purchases comprised a Gessner rotary press in 1884, a second Houget gig in 1885, and a third one in 1888.

FLOOD.

In the spring of 1881 a great freshet swelled the Yanticaw River, and an immense volume of water was hurled into the mill pond. Under its pressure, the mill dam, built in 1860, gave way. The accident happened at 5:30 o'clock in the morning, March 7, 1881. Repairs had to be made at once and a temporary dam was constructed on the site of an old dam in use twenty years before. In two days the mills were in operation again. A new dam

—THE TURN OF THE CENTURY—

was built on the site of the one that was washed away, and this one is still in use.

A NEW OAKES EMPLOYEE.

In the winter of 1883 Frank V. Oakes, a son of John Oakes and a cousin of Thomas Oakes, entered the employ of the mill. He was then nineteen years of age. Within ten years he was made superintendent, a position he filled with ability and unflagging industry for thirty years until his retirement in 1923. He was educated in the schools of Bloomfield and was especially fond of all sorts of athletics.

NEW BUILDING AND EQUIPMENT.

In 1892 the largest expenditure for building purposes in the history of the mills up to that date was made, for a new carding and spinning building. In that same year a new Corliss engine of 250 horsepower was purchased from the Watts, Campbell Company, of Newark, New Jersey, and placed in a new engine room. It was at that time the largest stationary steam engine in the town and a splendid piece of machinery.

An important addition to the mill equipment was made in 1893, when eight Asa Lee mules arrived from England and were set up in the new building. Five sets



Frank V. Dakes

—THE TURN OF THE CENTURY—

of Davis & Furber 48-inch cards were also added to the mill equipment in 1893. Three German fulling machines, built by Kenyon Brothers, were put in operation in 1893, in addition to the five fulling mills then in use. Ten 112-inch Knowles looms were purchased in 1893 and eight more in 1894. A Delahunty dyeing machine was installed in 1892, and a wire napping machine was bought in 1893 and another one in 1894. An excellent Parks & Woolson brushing machine was put in operation in 1894, and a second one in 1895. Between 1890 and 1895 an immense amount of money was expended in building and machinery, and the mills were brought completely up to date in working efficiency. A new building was erected in 1899 for worsted, carding, combing and spinning.

EXHIBITIONS.

An industrial exposition was held in Newark, New Jersey, in 1872, and cloth from the Oakes Mills was exhibited. Distinguished visitors to the exposition were General U. S. Grant, Horace Greeley, and General Benjamin F. Butler. General Grant was particularly pleased with the Oakes' exhibit and commented on the excellent quality and finish of the cloth. The dark blue material for military and other official uniforms greatly impressed the General. At the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia

—THE TURN OF THE CENTURY—

in 1876 the Oakes cloth and that of one mill in the west of England were named the best shown, and were awarded medals.

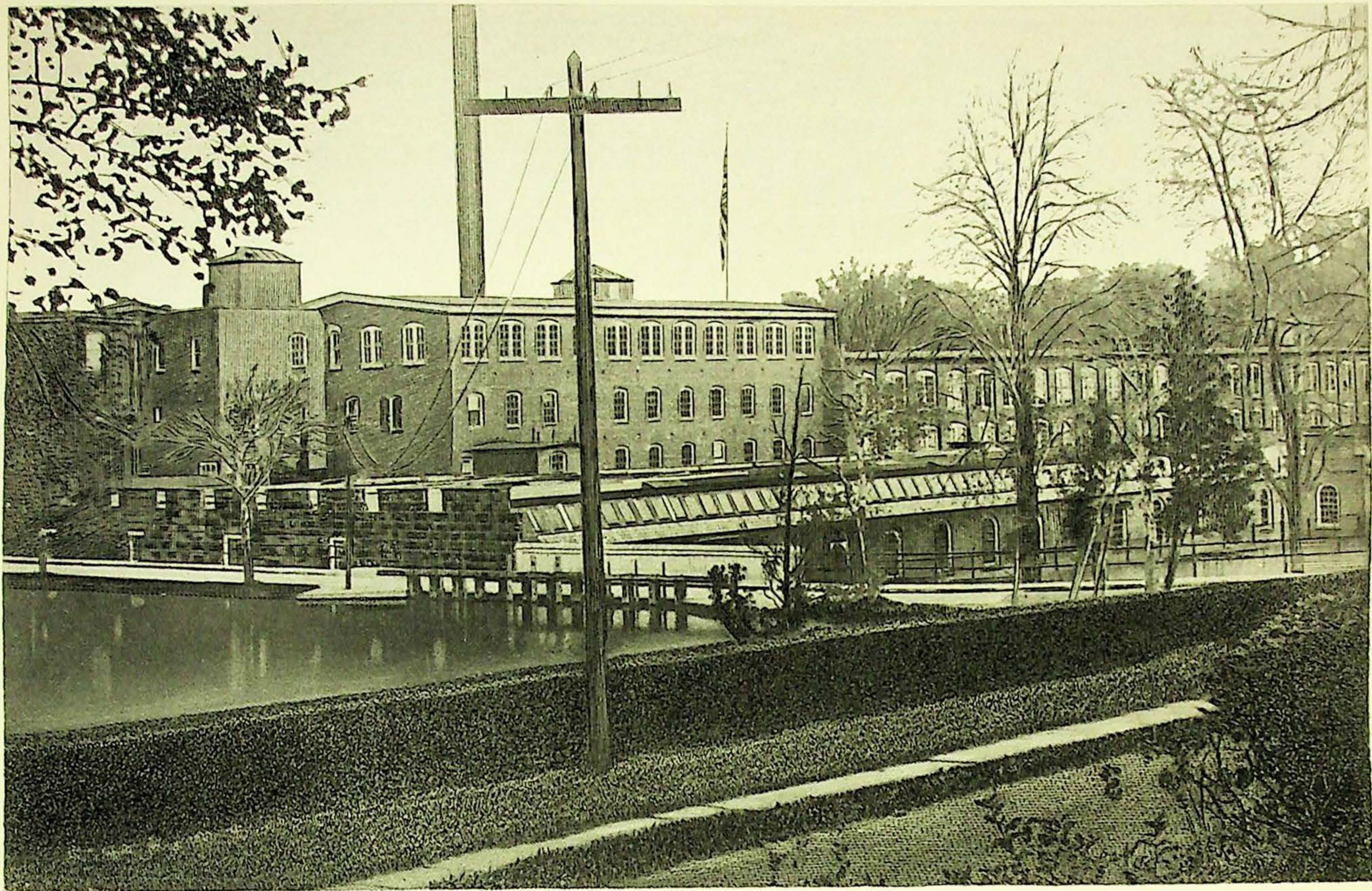
At the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, in 1893, the Oakes Company made a fine display of cloth, comprising thirty pieces in all, including poland beavers, kersey overcoatings, melton cloths, carriage cloths, and indigo fabrics. Previous to sending the exhibition to Chicago, it was placed on display in the mills for the enjoyment of the townspeople. A nationally known incident in the history of the Oakes product was the presentation to President William McKinley of cloth for his inaugural suit.

1905-1930—FOURTH QUARTER CENTURY.

In this fourth quarter century there have been several additions to the weave shop. In order to expedite the moving of materials about the building three Otis elevators were installed in 1925. In 1927 a combination carpenter shop, machine shop and carbonizing room was added to the mill plant.

MORE POWER.

The supplying of power to keep the vast machinery in the mills in motion has always been more or less of a



PRESENT MILL OF THOMAS OAKES & Co. 1927
SUCCESSORS TO D. OAKES & SON

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problem. In the early days the Yanticaw River was much more of a stream than it is now, and its water turned the water wheels that provided power for the mills. In the course of time conditions arose that tended to deplete this supply of water. Deforestation, street paving, and sewer construction were among the causes for this in a minor way, but a major reason was the use of water from the river for farm irrigation, some of the farms along the stream now consuming large quantities of water for this purpose. Water as a motive power in the mills was gradually superseded by steam. It was not long before increased machinery began to overtax the capacity of the 250-horsepower Corliss engine then in use, and in 1901 a low-pressure cylinder was added, increasing its horsepower to 500. The boiler plant of the mills was increased from time to time to supply the steam engine and other needs. The boiler house was enlarged in 1902, and two internally fired boilers installed. It was again enlarged in 1923, and three more internally fired boilers added.

In 1915 a new power house was built and a De La Vergne solid injection 100-horsepower engine placed in it. This engine gave such good satisfaction that in 1917, a 450-horsepower engine of the same kind was installed, but the need of the mills exceeded the capacity of that great machine, and the supplying of additional power

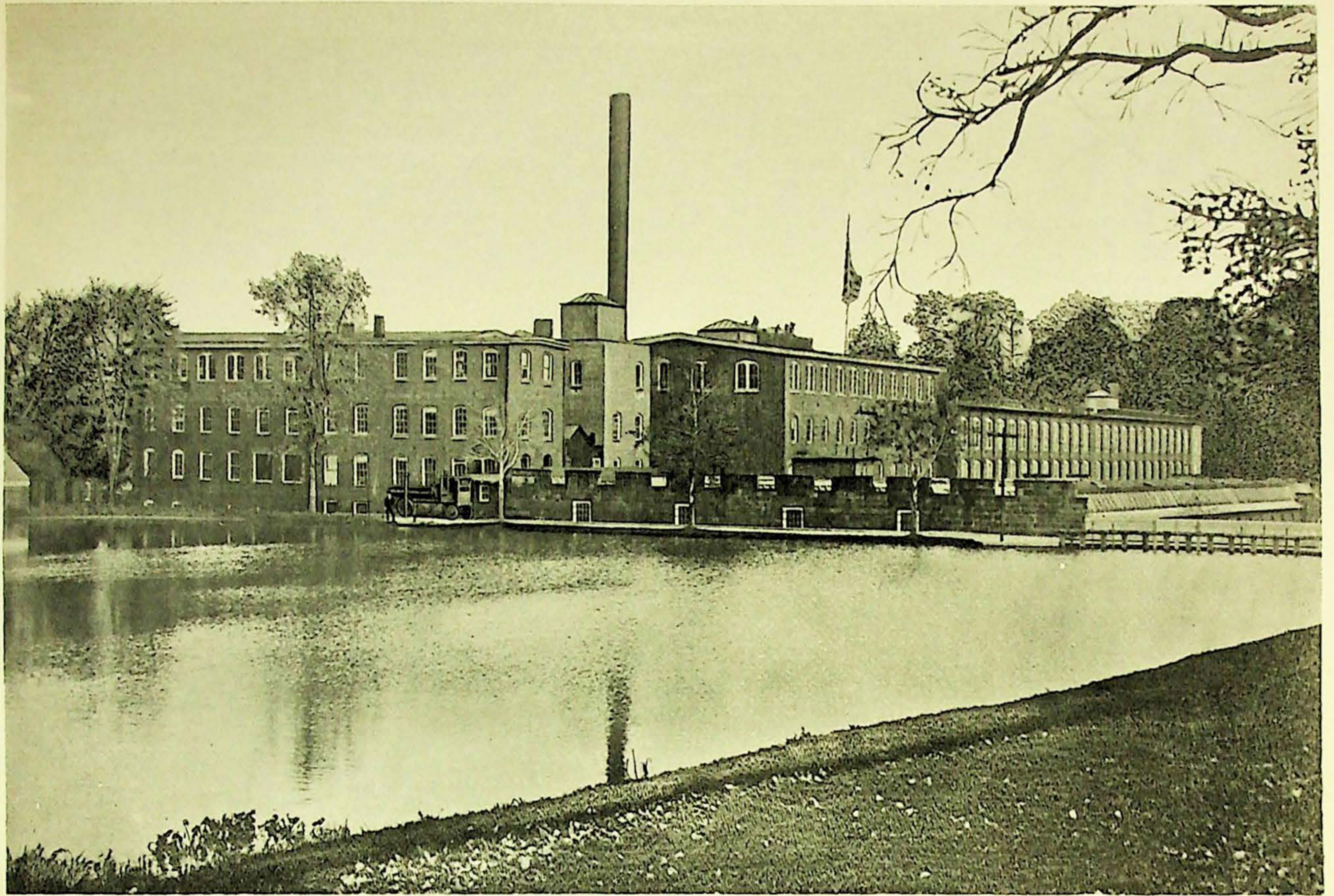
—THE TURN OF THE CENTURY—

confronted the management. Another De La Vergne engine of 400 horsepower was installed in 1928.

PRODUCTS.

In 1924 announcement was made in the "New York Commercial" that the Thomas Oakes & Company organization would put on the market in 1925 a line of indigo wool dyed serges in fourteen, sixteen, and eighteen ounce weights, and these fabrics were unreservedly guaranteed to be color fast. "Manufacturing of indigo wool dyed serges," the "New York Commercial" stated, "is an accomplishment that has been aimed at by textile trades for many years and its achievement in the Oakes serges is the result of many years' intensive experimentation in their own dyehouse. Only the most carefully selected wool and the best indigo dyes are used."

The "New York Commercial," in commenting on the making of woolen goods at the Oakes mills stated: "As manufacturers of uniform cloths, Thomas Oakes & Co. have an unbroken record, dating back many years for producing several grades of woolen cloths. The personnel of the mills has been kept up, and on the verge of entrance upon the second hundred years the indications are for a long-continued prosperous career. That of the first century was from a small and humble beginning to



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SUCCESSORS TO D. OAKES & SON

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a plant of magnitude and capacity. The growth of the second century must be from a well established plant to a larger one. Advantage has been taken of the progress of science in the improvement of cloth manufacture. Fabrics, including whipcords, khakis and overcoatings of various weights for police, firemen and other uniformed forces, of the first quality are produced.

“The company has the patronage of a very large percentage of the uniformed civil forces in the prominent cities of the United States.

“With a plant located near New York, the Oakes mills have been able to attract skilled spinners and weavers as well as workers in the other departments of the woolen industry. Besides the uniform cloth on which the great reputation of the mills rests, they also turn out other kinds of men’s wear in woolens, worsteds, fancies and staple effects. In the operation of the Oakes plant every process in the manufacture of woolen and worsted piece goods is accomplished from the handling of the raw wool to successive stages of spinning yarn, weaving the fabrics and finishing them. The product of the mills is distributed throughout the United States.”

The reputation of the Oakes mills products since 1830 has rested upon quality. The testimonial of the “New York Commercial” harmonizes with the general testimony of the clothing trade in regard to the Oakes mills

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and it is highly gratifying at the close of one hundred years of business to look back over the record that the mills have made.

SELLING AGENTS.

The keynote of the entire story of the Oakes mills is stability and progress along substantial, clearly defined lines, and it is but natural to look for these qualities in the various contacts of the organization with the commercial world. In no department of the business have these attributes maintained more strongly than in distribution, for in the long history of the company one organization has acted as selling agent for the Oakes product. The names under which this concern has operated (names altered as time brought changes in the personnel) are as follows: Wilson G. Hunt & Company; Sullivan, Randolph & Budd; N. Sullivan & Company; Sullivan, Vail & Company; and from 1903 to the present, Cary, Deuscher & Dennis, the members of the firm being: Samuel E. Cary, who died May 8, 1927; Theodore J. Deuscher, Calvin L. Dennis, and Horace C. Brunner.

PRESENT MANAGEMENT.

Thomas Oakes died in 1924, and the conduct of the mills was laid upon the shoulders of his sons, David and



David Oakes

—THE TURN OF THE CENTURY—

George A. Oakes, and they have borne the burden well. The mills have held to the high quality of their products, and the outlook is that the same progressive policy will continue and that they will go on successfully. There is one feature of the first century of the mills' history, however, that will not be duplicated in the second, that is, there will not be the same personal touch between the mills and the town and its people as in the early years of the first century. Despite this, there is enough of the old Bloomfield community spirit carried over into the new Bloomfield to warrant a feeling of pride that such an institution as Thomas Oakes & Company's mills has grown up in its midst and has attained an honorable and successful centennial anniversary.

The superintendent of the plant is Robert Stein, who entered the organization in May, 1900, as designer and assistant superintendent. He has held his present position since 1923. Both as superintendent and as designer he has been a valuable member of the Oakes staff; his skill in the latter capacity is doubtless an inheritance from his father, David Stein, one of the ablest and best known textile designers in the United States.

DAVID OAKES.

David Oakes was born in Bloomfield, May 21, 1869. He attended the Bloomfield public schools and Newark

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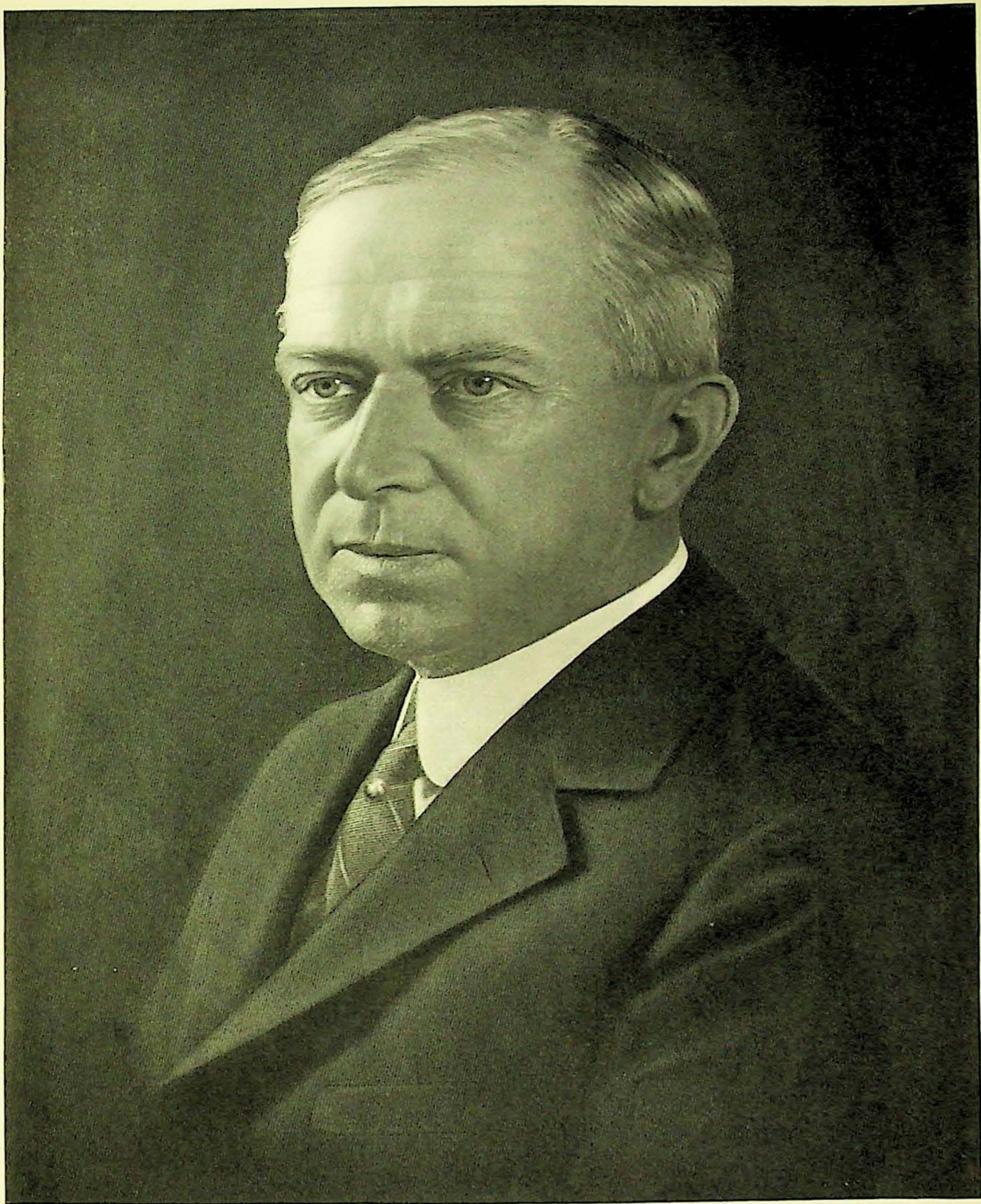
Academy, and at an early age became associated with his father in the mill. Other activities of a business and social character with which Mr. Oakes has been identified are: a special partnership in the brokerage firm of Schuyler, Chadwick & Burnham; director in the Bloomfield Bank and Trust Company; member of the board of directors of the National Association of Wool Manufacturers; member of the Bankers Club of America; member of Kane Lodge, No. 454, F. & A. M., Scottish Rite, and Salaam Temple; the New York Athletic Club; the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club; the Essex County Country Club; the New York Club, and the New Jersey Automobile and Motor Club.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS OAKES.

George Augustus Oakes was born in Bloomfield, July 9, 1872. He attended the Bloomfield public schools, Newark Academy, and Rutgers College, and was graduated from the latter. Like his brother he entered the mill at an early age. His technical knowledge of chemistry, engineering and electricity has been a great asset to the business.

AFTER 100 YEARS.

The Bloomfielder in 1830, looking northward on Belleville Avenue over the property now occupied by



Geo. A. Danks,



THOMAS OAKES & COMPANY
THE FOUNTAIN IN THE MILL YARD, 1929

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Oakes Mills, saw a small frame structure almost lost to view in the vast expanse of rough and wooded land. The mill property was then in a primitive condition and the landscaper's art had not yet been applied to it. Looking from the same viewpoint now the eye beholds a scene that is finely described by Emma J. Feldman, an industrial writer, who recently made a tour of the mills. "Far in from the street," says Miss Feldman, "nestled picturesquely beside a river and lake, are the woolen mills of Thomas Oakes & Co. Mill employees glancing up from their work see through the windows from one side a view down the valley of the Yanticaw River, and on the other side a vast expanse of lawn stretching beyond the buildings. In the inner yard a flowing fountain overhung with plants meets the view, and again looking outward the eye gazes upon the placid sheet of water known as the mill pond, and beyond and over the spacious and well-kept grounds of Oakside, the Oakes family residence. In every direction the view is pleasant and agreeable and the eye meets bits of beauty in unexpected places. This is the setting appropriately of a plant steeped in the traditions of American industry." This description of the transformation of the mill buildings and surroundings showing a high degree of development, is also applicable to the mill product. There is the same marked contrast between the cloths that were turned out in 1830 and those

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that are now turned out, that there is between the mill premises in 1830 and in 1930.

This, then, in and of Bloomfield, is an industrial organization that has grown with the community, and that has been an integral part of each phase of its progress. The members of the Oakes family who have directed its destinies have shared in the bearing of each community burden, in the solving of each problem affecting the common interest. Bloomfield people have here found employment and opportunity for advancement. The roots of the business are deep in the soil of the town, and surrounding and permeating the plant and the organization is the intangible, yet none the less definite atmosphere of an institution that has consistently meant more than wages and dividends, an atmosphere that speaks silently, yet eloquently, of pride of race and work and product, an atmosphere ideally American.



In Memoriam

THOMAS OAKES—(1777-1823).

Thomas Oakes, the progenitor of the Oakes family that founded and carried on for a hundred years the Oakes woolen mills, came to America from England in 1802. In England he received a thorough education in mathematics and philosophy. Possessing a strong, fearless, and inquisitive mind, he pursued these and all collateral studies to a great extent, together with practical application of those parts that are most useful in the general concerns of life. In mechanics and hydraulics he had few equals.

In 1802 he settled at Bloomfield, New Jersey. His scientific and mechanical skill soon commanded extensive and profitable business in New Jersey and in different parts of the Union, but especially in Pennsylvania. When the Schuylkill Navigation Company were about to commence their extensive and highly important operations, an engineer of the first talents and experience was indispensable. These requirements were amply satisfied in the choice of Mr. Oakes. To the end of his life he held a prominent place in the world of practical science, and was active in furthering the progress of his country. Mr. Oakes died August 14, 1823.

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DAVID OAKES—(1809-1878).

David Oakes, son of Thomas and Rachel (Kingsland) Oakes, was born in Bloomfield, New Jersey, January 13, 1809. In the town of his birth he lived until his seventieth year. He acquired his education in the local schools, and later entered upon an apprenticeship in the woolen industry. When his apprenticeship days were over he returned to Bloomfield and established a woolen manufactory on his own account. The story of this enterprise has been told on preceding pages.

David Oakes was one of the most progressive and forceful business men and manufacturers of his day. He was a member of the State Legislature, a director of the National Newark Banking Company, and a member of the board of managers of the Howard Savings Institute. His religious affiliation was with the Bloomfield Presbyterian Church, of which body he was an earnest and sincere member, serving at one time on the board of trustees.

David Oakes died July 26, 1878, and was survived by the third child, Thomas, who was destined to carry on the great industrial enterprise so well and firmly established by the father. The passing of Mr. Oakes lost to this community an industrial pioneer whose beneficent activities had contributed in great measure to the growth and commercial progress of Bloomfield. As an upright



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George A. Oakes

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man whose every business identification was influenced by the same rigid ethical code that characterized his religious and private life, and as a loyal citizen whose first thought was always for the general good of the local citizenry, he will be remembered and revered in the community where he spent his long, useful and active life.

GEORGE A. OAKES—(1835-1861).

George A. Oakes, the eldest son of David Oakes, was born February 15, 1835. That he was a studious, reliable young man is attested by the fact that at fifteen years of age he was made an assistant teacher in the Bloomfield free school. At the age of twenty-three years he was admitted by his father as a partner in the mills, in May, 1858. On December 24, 1861, three and a half years later, he died. His death was due to an attack of typhoid fever with a fatal relapse caused by a too early return to business.

THOMAS OAKES—(1838-1924).

Thomas Oakes was born at Bloomfield, New Jersey, June 6, 1838, son of David and Abigail H. (Baldwin) Oakes, and grandson of Thomas and Rachel (Kingsland) Oakes. He received his education in the public schools of Bloomfield and at the Charles W. Davis

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Boarding School, also at Bloomfield, New Jersey. He entered, while very young, the employ of his father in one of the small, one-story frame buildings in which the woolen business was started, one of which still stands, in conjunction with the large brick factory now used. These buildings are at the rear of the Oakes home on Belleville Avenue. Some time prior to the death of his father in 1878, he took over the entire management of the woolen business, and after the death of his father the firm became known as Thomas Oakes and Company. Both father and son were appreciated as square dealing and considerate employers, in proof of which it may be stated that some of the workers have been with the mills for over fifty years.

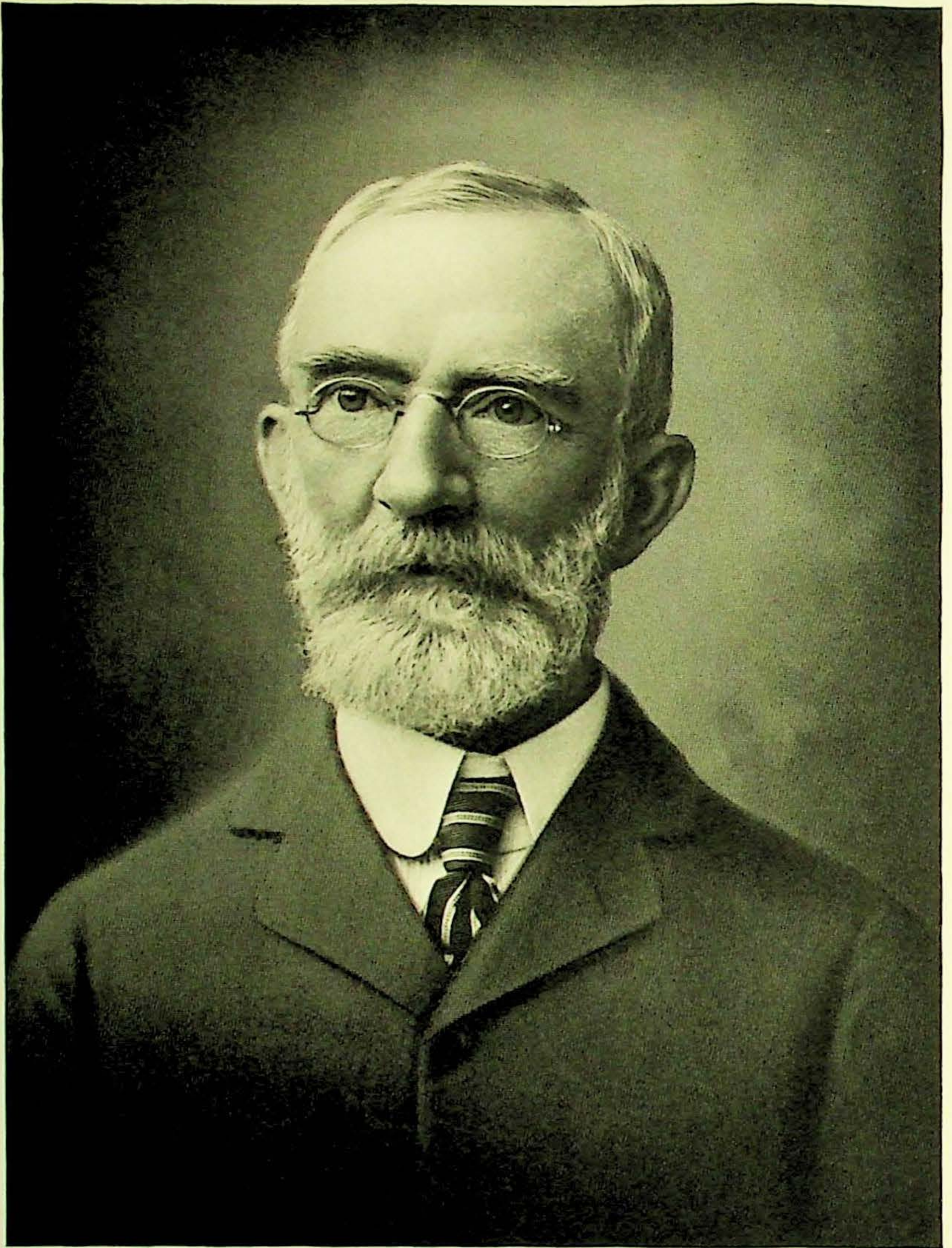
Mr. Oakes was also president, from its organization in 1889, of the Bloomfield National Bank, and for thirteen years he was president of The United New Jersey Railroad and Canal Company, resigning from that office in 1921, although continuing as a director until his death. He did not care for professional politics, but he served for several years as a member of the township committee which preceded the present Bloomfield town council. For thirty-five years he was president of the board of education, resigning in 1915. He was a communicant of the First Presbyterian Church of Bloomfield. He held membership in the Bankers Club of America, New York.



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Henry P. Dodd

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In the death of Thomas Oakes, June 13, 1924, Bloomfield lost one of its most valued and respected citizens. He was during all of his mature years connected with the business affairs of the community and his influence all that time had been constructive and in the interest of the public welfare. He took not only an abiding interest but an honorable part in public affairs, and he helped in the upbuilding of many institutions, giving liberally of his substance and proving his value as a citizen. There were few charitable or humane movements within that period to which he did not contribute willingly and liberally. He quickly learned the lessons that enabled him to meet the rapidly changing conditions in the woolen business and to pluck from them success. Out of the experiences of his youth and the achievements of his manhood have grown the things which made his life a real and living factor in the growth of the community of Bloomfield, which he loved, and which he served for so many years.

HENRY P. DODD—(1836-1917).

In 1861 Henry P. Dodd, then a clerk in Frame and Pierson's general store at the town center, entered the employ of David Oakes as a bookkeeper and general clerical worker. Such was his sincere fidelity to the interests of the business that in 1878 at the death of David Oakes he was made a partner. He retired from active business

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in 1894, and his death occurred in 1917. Mr. Dodd was a descendant of one of the New England families that founded the city of Newark. He inherited the conservatism that marked the leaders among the descendants of that Puritan ancestry. He gave close attention to the details of the business, and for a number of years made wool purchasing trips in the West. Mr. Dodd was of a very genial spirit, had a large fund of interesting reminiscences, and took pleasure in relating them. He served from time to time in various official bodies, such as Commissioner of Tax Appeals, on the Board of Assessors, and the Board of Delinquent Tax Adjustments. He was widely known throughout the town and held in esteem by many friends.

