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Donor William A. Broadhead
Jamestown N.Y.
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The history of the woolen industry in America records that the first woolen mill was established at Hartford, Connecticut in 1788, and that, a year later, General Washington was inaugurated President of the United States wearing a suit from cloth made in that mill. Then, this region was an almost uncharted wilderness traversed only by Indian trails.

Little more than twenty five years later, thirteen families had made their rude homes here at the "Rapida", and evidently the home manufacture of woolen cloth had progressed sufficiently to induce Daniel Hazeltine to set up a shop for the "dressing" of cloth which had been spun and woven by hand in the neighboring cabins. This hardy pioneer, it is said, journeyed alone in his canoe to Pittsburg and return to obtain the castings and necessary metal parts for his crude machinery, establishing himself near the bank of the creek at a site at the foot of Pine Street; then a rough clearing, broken only by the charred stumps of trees.

In these days of rapid transportation it is difficult for us to conceive of how dependent upon themselves and each other the people of this little community of 393 people must have been. Carding, spinning, weaving and dyeing occupied many hours of the short winter days in most of these rough homes and when finally some of these necessary duties could be done outside, it must have proven a great relief to those who could barter home products in exchange for the service. The price of cloth "dressing" ran from 15 to 44 cents per linear yard.

In 1823, Hazeltine took as a partner Robert Falconer and extended his operations to include the weaving of cloth. Thirteen years later, they sold out to Daniel H. Grandin and, with the proceeds, bought the
cloth dressing plant of Chandler and Windsor, which was established in 1827, and, in which, after building an addition, they installed looms for weaving. These were doubtless hand operated because at that time there were only eight power looms in the country, all in Connecticut.

The site of the new plant was on Windsor Street adjacent to the present site of the Marlin Rockwell plant. In 1865, the Hazeltine, Falconer partnership consolidated with Allen, Grandin & Co., which had operated a mill on the south side of Brooklyn Square. A new corporation was formed, composed of Augustus F. Allen, Jerome Preston and others, operating as Allen, Preston and Company. In 1884, Preston, Oliver Lyford and William A. Bradshaw, with others, formed a corporation known as the Jamestown Woolen Mills; it being the direct outgrowth of the original cloth dressing mill established by Daniel Hazeltine. For some years this mill operated successfully, its product being widely and favorably known. A suit made of the old "Jamestown Blue" being very heavy but almost wear proof.

The equipment consisted of three sets of cards, a section of Crompton looms, together with fulling stocks and equipment for dyeing with logwood, cutch, indigo and other colors in use before the coal tar derivatives had been invented. Operations were abandoned near the close of the nineteenth century, though much of the machinery was still in place in 1915.

There is brief mention in some histories of a man by the name of Holmes, who is said to have set up a single card in the attic of Judge Prendergast's grist mill "at the foot of Main Street", which was run by Simmons and Blanchar from Oxford, N. Y. Apparently this venture was short lived or was, perhaps, absorbed by the more successful wool carders just mentioned. It is interesting to note, however, that it was Blanchar who originally used the name "Jamestown" to designate the settlement previously known as the "Rapids" or "Prendergast's Mill".
In 1872, William Broadhead, who had come from England in 1843, returned to his native Yorkshire for a visit. While there, he was impressed with the growing possibilities of the manufacture of worsteds, which developed much more slowly than did the simpler system of woolen production. While there, he met Joseph Turner and, on his return, interested William Hall in investing in an "alpaca mill" for the manufacture of dress goods. In 1873 the partnership of Hall, Broadhead and Turner was formed and ground broken for the erection of a stone and brick factory on land near what was known as the lower dam, on Harrison Street, adjacent to the line of the Atlantic & Great Western Railroad. Machinery was bought in England and skilled carders, Spinners and weavers were brought from there also to set up the machines and train the local people in what was then a new type of manufacture. This is said to be the first mill operating on the Bradford system west of Philadelphia to perform all stages of production from raw wool to finished cloth.

This partnership lasted little over a year and a half when William Broadhead sold out his interest. The partnership was thereupon reorganized and given the name of Hall & Company, with W. C. J. Hall as manager. Later he retired and Samuel Briggs managed the plant until his death in 1908. Under his able regime, new buildings were erected and modernization was carried on. On his death, the business was incorporated as the Jamestown Worsted Mills with his son, Arthur Briggs, as manager. In 1915, the two sons of William Broadhead, Shelden B. and Almet N. Broadhead, purchased a controlling interest in the company, thus reacquiring a part in the business their father had been instrumental in starting 42 years before. In 1922, the plant was remodelled and greatly improved. Since then, it has experienced the vicissitudes common to the textile industry in those years, but is still in active operation, employing an average of between five hundred and six hundred persons and producing well regarded fabrics for both men's and women's wear.
Turner remained with Hall & Company but a comparatively short time before going to Cleveland where he started a textile plant, which, later, was joined with others to form what is now the Cleveland Worsted Mills.

When William Broadhead retired from the firm of Hall, Broadhead & Turner in 1875, he immediately formed a partnership with his two sons as William Broadhead & Sons and, at once, prepared to erect a new "alpaca" plant on the site once occupied by the original Hazeltine plant at the foot of Pine Street. As a result of tremendous effort, in those days when money seemed unobtainable, the new venture prospered and the plant was steadily expanded until it had about five hundred looms and the necessary preliminary equipment of carding, combing, spinning and twisting to make it a completely self contained unit.

In about 1892, William Broadhead & Sons erected a mill in Falconer known as the Meadowbrook Mill. It was first designed for the manufacture of special fabrics by Lister & Sons from England. They, however, proved unsuccessful and for some years, it was operated as an auxiliary yarn mill to the Broadhead plant which was barely able to fill orders which flowed in. The Meadowbrook Mill was later sold to the Cleveland Worsted Mills which operated it and the Ferncliff Mill in Falconer for a number of years. Neither is now in use in the production of textiles.

The Broadhead partnership continued until 1925 when both the brothers, Shelden and Almet, died, their father having remained active until 1910 when he succumbed after reaching the age of 91 years. In the spring of 1927, the last yard of cloth was woven and the firm of William Broadhead & Sons ceased to exist after fifty two years of active operation, during which its dress goods had become favorably known from Maine to California.

Thomas Henry Smith, who was a native of Skipton, Yorkshire, erected a substantial brick building on Center Street, near its junction with Harrison Street, in 1880 for the carding and spinning of cotton. The product was of unusually high quality and the business continued
until after the World War when the machinery was all sold and exported abroad as a complete unit. The buildings are now occupied by the Crescent Tool Company.

In 1888, the Jamestown Woolen Spinning Company was formed by George Kay, George Halsall and Thomas Lemon, with a brick factory building on the South side of the Chadakoin River almost opposite to the plant of Hall & Company. They produced yarns and cloth until 1896 when the management changed and the organization was incorporated under the name of Empire Worsted Mills with J. W. Doubleday as president and L. M. Butman as secretary. On the retirement of Doubleday in 1915, Butman became president and carried on those duties until he retired in 1932. The Empire Worsted Mills enjoyed outstanding success during most of the years since its incorporation but during the last ten years has shared the misfortunes common to the industry. It is in active operation and produces men's wear only, having ceased to make women's wear for some time. Since Butman's death, Clyde Carnahan has been president, with Wright Broadhead in charge of sales and finance and Hjalmar Swanson as superintendent.

For some time, the Empire Worsted Mills controlled the Acme Worsted Mills which were established in the building erected for Jamestown's original water works near the junction of Fairmount Avenue with Jones and Gifford Avenue. Production of yarn and cloth was carried on actively in that plant from 1915 up to about ten years ago.

In 1892, the Chautauqua Worsted Mills were established in Falconer by Fletcher Goodwill and Herbert J. Goodwill and were operated in the manufacture of worsted yarn for knitting and weaving until about ten years ago. The plant was idle for some time but has been acquired by outside capital and is now operated as the National Worsted Mills.

Jerome Preston again entered the textile field in 1898 when he joined with Frank B. Field and Edward Mackey to establish a factory for
the production of Turkish towels and wash cloths of cotton and Union Towels of imported linen. The plant known as the Chautauqua Towel Mills went through a number of reorganizations and finally ceased business only a few years ago.

In 1897, E. J. Ashwell & Company started a small plant for the manufacture of Lisle thread and found a large demand for gassed yarns. During its early years, this firm extended rapidly but has been out of business for many years.

Just at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Hall Textile Corporation was formed for the weaving of towels. The factory is on the west side of the city on the Hunt Road and has continued operation in spite of southern competition which has caused the closing or removal of so many northern and eastern cotton plants.

Despite the fact that few textile plants in Jamestown and vicinity have been successful in carrying on to the present time and, while many of those which have failed have been all but forgotten as the years have passed, nevertheless each has to a greater or less extent stimulated the growth and life of the city. Each has brought some measure of prestige to the name of Jamestown because all made honest goods and carried on their dealings on a high plane of business ethics. The industry has been of importance to the growth of the city second only to wood working. In the early days, it attracted from abroad hundreds of families of English people of that sturdy stock which has been the backbone of American citizenship since Colonial days.

Many thousands of people have derived their livelihood and been enabled to raise their families as a result of the early establishment and continued development of the industry here and through their earnings, have enabled other enterprises to thrive and prosper.

Surely textile manufacturing has become an integral part of the city's life and should be fostered and encouraged lest it cease to exist here as it has done in many sections of New England.
For the past ten years, the industry as a whole has encountered grave difficulties through restrictive federal legislation, through over-zealous labor leaders and through most unfortunate marketing practices. There seems reason to believe that some, at least, of these disadvantages will be less destructive in the near future and, that the industry may continue here and elsewhere on a more secure and healthy basis. It is most devoutly to be hoped that the surviving units of the many that have been instituted in Jamestown may long continue to keep their spindles running and their looms in operation.

William A. Broadhead