

THE BERKSHIRE HILLS.

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BERKSHIRE COUNTY, PAST AND PRESENT, HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATED SKETCH MONTHLY.

A GREAT BERKSHIRE INDUSTRY.

Pioneer Shoe Manufacturers of North Adams.

SAMPSON AND THE KNIGHTS OF ST. CRISPIN.

Importation of the First Chinese Workmen into the Northern States to learn a Yankee Trade.

FIRST HUSTLER IN THE FIELD.

George Millard was the first citizen of North Adams to extensively enter into the manufacture of boots and shoes, and was therefore the pioneer of this now great and thriving industry in the Tunnel City of Berkshire County. He was a short, thick-set, heavy man, filled with indomitable business enterprise, push and pluck, of genial, good-humored and sociable characteristics, of great public spirit and thoroughly devoted to the welfare and progress of the old time village and town and its religious, political and financial progress. He is first remembered in the region of 1840 as keeping the largest retail grocery store in the village in the brick building now standing on Eagle street, with his residence just to the south of it, and which was known for very many years as the Millard Block. It was the gilt-edged establishment of its kind of the locality, it had for its patrons not only the first families of the village, but the large farming community roundabout, and in fact most of the working people who were not connected with the local manufacturing establishments.

THE OLD BRICK STORE.

This store was a country store on a large scale, and carried a large stock not only of West India goods, farm produce, flour, grain and staples, but also of dry goods, boots and shoes, hardware and all supplies, commodities and utensils which were of general public necessity.

It was the market to which the agricultural population of all that section flocked and found ready sale for their products, and to which they made constant pilgrimage either for cash or barter. Other stores of the character springing up in the village, in time Mr. Millard rented his store and a long wooden building in its rear as a boot and shoe factory, to which business he devoted himself during the balance of his residence in the town, in later life removing to Bennington, Vt., where he purchased a cork factory which he was successfully operating at the time of his death.

BROKE THE FIRST GROUND.

During his residence in North Adams he was a veritable pillar in the Baptist church, was elected twice as representative to the Legislature, took an active part in forwarding all local enterprises and reforms, and was most ardent in his championship for the opening of the Pittsfield and North Adams, the Troy and Boston Railroads, and for prosecuting the work of building the Hoosac Tunnel. To the latter cause he contributed much time and means, neither of which he spared in his enthusiastic labors to help bring about the accomplishment of this great undertaking. It was to him who was accorded the honor of breaking the first ground on the west side of the mountain, with a brightly gleaming new shovel, in the presence of a large gathering of people assembled from far and from near.

BARTERED FOR FARMERS' PRODUCE.

The entire product of the first boot and shoe factories in North Adams in the forties was marketed in the towns and villages within a radius of fifty miles about the village, delivered by teams to retail stores, and peddled out among the farmers in wagons driven by the manufacturers themselves and by trusted men in their employ. A good deal of the pay received for these boots and brogans and coarse wear for women and children, was in butter, eggs, cheese, poultry, potatoes, apples, and such.

The help in the factories was largely paid their wages in this produce, to which was added just sufficient cash to tide them along. The women and many of the working girls of that day were clad in prunello gaiters, which though very serviceable, were rather too light for ordinary wear and for comfort, except in the summer months.

STARTED IN PENNIMAN'S ROW.

In 1843, Edwin Childs and David C. Rogers commenced the manufacture of boots and shoes in a couple of upper rooms in Penniman's Row. In 1845 this firm removed to the Millard store on Eagle street and took in Harvey Ingraham as a partner, a citizen who had a capital of \$10,000, which he had amassed as a carpenter in the employ of the firm of Brown & Harris on their mill grounds, afterwards owned by Sylvander Johnson. In 1847 Edwin Childs retired from the firm and going to Montreal became a prominent shoe manufacturer in Canada, and the same year Joshua K. Rogers and George Millard became partners with Ingraham under the firm of Rogers, Ingraham & Co. In 1850 George Millard bought out the concern and with Harvey Ingraham and W. F. Waterbury conducted the business in a large three-story wooden building which he had built on the east side of Eagle street and opposite the brick store, and which was known as the Millard Hall Block. In 1857 George Millard bought out his partners, and for a while ran the business alone, and afterwards with Edwin Rogers, and then with his sons Alden C. and Henry S. Millard. During this time Harvey Ingraham, with his brother William, opened a factory just west of the David Darling homestead on Main street, which they conducted until the former's death. Alden C. Millard retiring from the Millard Hall firm and removing to Chicago, Henry S. Millard and his father conducted the business until on George Millard's removal to Bennington, Henry S. Millard purchased the plant and took in Jerome B. Jackson as a partner.

GROWTH OF THE MILLARD WORKS.

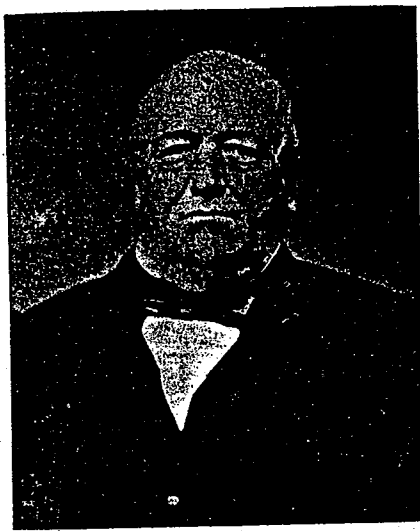
The firm of Millard & Jackson continued business at the Eagle street stand for a short time, occupying both the upper stories of the Millard Hall Block. Previously the second story of the building had been used as a public hall, and for quite a number of years it was the gilt-edged place for holding concerts, lectures and for political gatherings, the third story and the greater portion of the first being devoted to boot and shoe making, the storage of stock and the packing of goods. Millard & Jackson then built that portion of the large Union street works now owned by Norman L. Millard & Co., bordering on Union street and the entrance to Willow Dell, or about a third of the present great establishment, and removed their business to this brick structure. In 1867 William H. Whitman purchased Mr. Jackson's interest and the firm became that of Millard & Whitman, and it was thus conducted up to 1874, when by the purchase of H. S. Millard's interest by Norman L. Millard the firm was changed to that of Whitman & Millard. In 1882 Mr. Whitman disposed of the plant to Mr. Millard, who has enlarged the establishment to its present size, constantly increasing its popular output and growing up a great and successful business, having taken his nephew, C. K. Millard, into partnership in 1892.

THE ENTERPRISING CADY BROTHERS.

In 1866 Wm. G. and H. T. Cady as Cady Bros., descendants of the notable pioneer citizens, the Cadys and Bradfords, erected a large wooden shoe factory at the north end of Holden street, near the present site of the Weber shoe factory, and continued a most prosperous industry until 1880, when Wm. G. retired. H. T. Cady continued the business for a number of years afterwards and finally sold the plant to its present owners. For a number of years Wm. G. served the old town as one of its most efficient selectmen, and H. T. retiring from business has served the city as mayor and spent much time in travel abroad. In 1883 W. G. Cady and S. H. Fairfield as W. G. Cady & Co., built a large four-story wooden shoe factory on South Ashland street, from which after a few years Mr. Cady, because of ill-health, retired, and but a short time ago again started in the shoe manufacture at Greenfield, still retaining his residence in North Adams. The South Ashland street factory under the management of Mr. Fairfield is in most successful operation.

THE WHITMAN AND CANEDY PLANT.

The Canedy Clark Shoe Co. was founded in 1844 by Wm. H. Whitman and J. M. Canedy and was conducted as



GEORGE MILLARD.

the firm of Whitman, Canedy & Co. until 1889, when owing to the death of Mr. Whitman it was changed to that of Canedy & Wilkinson. In 1894 Mr. Canedy became the sole proprietor up to 1897, when a company was incorporated as the Clark, Canedy Co., with J. M. Canedy as president. The factory is a three-story brick structure on the west side of South Ashland street and is in a most flourishing condition. In 1895 the Wilkinson & Bliss Shoe Co. built a factory on Lincoln street, which was run for several years and then shut down.

C. T. SAMPSON'S FIRST EXPERIENCES.

The foundations of the C. T. Sampson Manufacturing Company were laid in 1850, when George Millard having purchased a bankrupt manufacturer's stock of boots and shoes in the eastern part of the state, engaged Calvin T. Sampson, then a young farmer of Stamford, Vt., and owning a few acres, to load them into a wagon and drive into neighboring towns and peddle them out either for cash or farmers' produce. On his first trip Sampson cleared as his commission \$25, and in a few weeks disposed of the lot with good wages for himself. Sampson then sold his Stamford farm and removed to North Adams, and with a capital of \$300 started in business. In 1851 he secured a small stock of goods from Boston parties on three months credit, which he peddled out in the village in a carpet bag and in ten days had sold them all out. In November, 1850, he open a retail store in the building now standing on the southwest corner of Main and Eagle streets, which he carried on most successfully until 1858, having safely passed through the severe financial crisis of 1857. Just above him on Eagle street was the old shoe store of Tom Hill, the first of any note in the village, of which Edwin Rogers was then proprietor, and the

competition was very sharp between the two, and sometimes a little strained, owing to the waggishness of Edwin, and the matter of fact characteristics of Calvin.

BECOMES A MANUFACTURER.

But Sampson attended strictly to his business and in the upper part of the building now occupied by Rice drug store in 1855 had began to manufacture a woman's leather shoe to take the place of prunello wear of that character, which found ready and popular sale. These he retailed over his own counter and jobbed out in a small way in exchange for goods of other manufacturers. His first shoemakers were N. A. Viall and Wm. G. Viall, the first workmen to come to North Adams from the eastern part of the state to make women's shoes. Of one or two apprentices employed, when but 25 pairs of shoes a day were being turned out, was William G. Cady, the veteran shoe manufacturer of northern Berkshire, who remained in his employ for seven years. N. A. Viall remained in the village but a short time and returned to his home in Oxford. William G. Viall continued with Mr. Sampson as his designer and foreman until 1856, when he took employment with Millard, Ingraham & Waterbury. After selling his retail store Sampson entered into shoe manufacture on a larger scale in the building known as the Cady Block on the corner of Eagle and Center streets. In 1862 he purchased the Bennett Tannery building near the Eagle street bridge, and bordering on the river, his business then having increased to an output of 360 pairs daily. He then employed W. G. Viall as his superintendent and from 1866 until 1887 his business increased to 3600 pairs per day.

BECOMES A GREAT ESTABLISHMENT.

In 1869 he purchased the large brick mill just east of the Arnold Print Works, on Marshall street, which had been erected for what was called the North Adams Tool Co., but which owing to a hitch in completing the organization of the same had never been occupied. This he filled with new machinery, the most improved article in which were patent pegging machines. Afterwards the C. T. Sampson Manufacturing Company was formed in 1878, of which C. T. Sampson was president and George W. Chase, treasurer. In 1887 Mr. Sampson sold his interest in the company and Mr. Chase became its president, the former retiring and having deceased but a few years since. Mr. Chase continued the business until about the close of the past century and since this time the works have been discontinued.

THE PRESENT GREAT OUTPUT.

No attempt is made in this sketch to show the increase in this great North Adams industry at the present day from its feeble conception in Penniman's Row and on Eagle street fully 63 years ago, which has risen to gigantic proportions, the products of which from first finding a barter market in the immediate locality, have reached all over the commercial world, making the real history of this Northern Berkshire manufacture a most remarkable event from its pioneer start down to the present time. Besides, from the birth of the boot and shoe industry at North Adams, Berkshire County became the rival in later years, with its rapid growth in that locality and with similar establishments in Adams, Cheshire, Dalton and Pittsfield, of the eastern counties of the state, as it is now, of great magnitude and importance.

THE VETERAN SHOEMAKER.

Wm. G. Viall, who is now resident at North Adams and who having grown gray in the service, was connected with the Sampson manufactory until it was closed a few years ago, was with Harvey Ingraham, Henry J. Pellett and a few other kindred musical spirits, the originators of brass band music in North Adams, for which in past years it was much famed. So many of the old band musicians were employees of the boot and shoe shops that the earlier organizations of this character were called the Shoemaker Bands. That these arrived at a high state of efficiency has been already noted in this monthly.

A FULL FOOT OVER THE CHAMPION.

It is remembered of George Millard that he was of a very jovial turn of mind and for his size and weight was very athletic. In 1836 a number of young men were trying their mettle in a running jump on the sidewalk in front of his store, when he came out in his shirt sleeves and proposed to take a hand in the sport. Judge of the surprise of the boys when he covered the ground a full foot in advance of their champion jumper, who gave him a cheer which echoed and re-echoed on the mountains roundabout.

THE OLD ARCADE WALKING MATCH.

The first public walking match in North Adams was held in a hall in the third story of the old Arcade Building. The floor was strewn with sawdust, a ring was roped in, there were a half dozen contestants at the start, and there was great excitement in the village. The contest lasted for two days and nights and the sprinters finally all collapsed but Sammy McClellan, a short-built, red-haired and somewhat eccentric little shoemaker who worked in the old brick store of George Millard. All the

artizans in leather of the period became intensely interested in Sammy, who showed wonderful courage, pertinacity and staying qualities. They filled the hall with cheers of encouragement, they watched his foot, sponged him down, and when he finally came off victorious and was awarded the prize, they celebrated his victory by carrying him home on their shoulders, and faithfully guarded his whole week of sleep to become rested up.

MOSTLY FROM THE HILLS.

The town of Stamford, Vt., notably contributed energy and enterprise to the building up of shoe manufacturing in North Adams, and it was from this locality that George Millard came to enter upon his business life in the village. From this town also came Calvin T. Sampson to enter upon his notable career, as also Norman L. Millard, at the head of the present great industry bearing his name in the Tunnel City. J. M. Canedy, at the head of the Clark, Canedy Company, was a native of Readsboro, Vt., while S. M. Fairfield was born in Florida, and the Messrs Rogers and Childs in Conway. Of the North Adams boys holding great prominence in this industry were the Messrs Cadys and W. H. Whitman, and every one of these shoe manufacturers from moderate beginnings won their way up to the highest rounds on the ladder of business enterprise and success.

MET WITH SOME DRAWBACKS.

Up to the time of the civil war C. T. Sampson, from his start on \$300 capital, had accumulated about \$16,000. Through losses from southern debtors in the war he became somewhat embarrassed, but recovered his foothold, and after the war built up a great custom all over the country, the quality of his work being such that for years he retained his patrons without having to solicit their trade. Though from an unfortunate entanglement in the Eagle Mowing Machine Company of Albany, his losses were over \$100,000, and which put him to great inconvenience for a time, he was a very wealthy man at his decease, he having bequeathed the bulk of his estate to charitable, benevolent and religious institutions.

AN ELEPHANT IN BOOTS.

George Millard was among the first business men in the county to have printed note heads and envelopes. The peculiarity of his design was an amusing one. It was an elephant clad in top-boots in which he was striding off at a high rate of speed, and upon whose side was printed, "George Millard, Boots and Shoes, North Adams, Mass." Notwithstanding engraved note heads

and envelopes soon came into use, Mr. Millard stuck to his original idea while he remained in that business. It is a vivid reminder of old times to have an esteemed patron in the present town of Adams occasionally write a word to this office with the old George Millard elephant on his envelope.

THE BIG ST. CRISPIN STRIKE.

Between 1868 and 1870 began the great conflict between C. T. Sampson and the Knights of St. Crispin, a leading union of shoe-workers in the United States having a large lodge at North Adams. This union having undertaken to dictate wage hours and wages to Mr. Sampson, met with a flat refusal on his part to treat with them. A strike in his works being in course of events, he suddenly discharged some members of the St. Crispin's Society whom he knew to be active in that organization, and sending to North Brookfield engaged 45 men on explicit terms, but these were prevailed upon by the St. Crispins to throw up their contracts. He then resorted to the novel expedient of employing Chinese labor in his factory. His assistant and right hand man for many years was sent to San Francisco where he hired 75 Chinamen who were landed at North Adams, June, 1870, amid the wildest excitement. This number was afterwards increased to 123, who remained in the village for 10 years and who made excellent workmen. Though these Celestials were wildly threatened with violence at the outset, the storm soon subsided and during their residence no cruelty or outrage happened to them, as they strictly minded their own business and were inoffensive and polite. They were barracked and boarded themselves on the Sampson grounds, receiving their supplies of tea, rice, etc., direct from China, and partaking of their food at long tables with their wonderful chop-sticks, occasionally invited a spectator to a marvellously delicious cup of tea.

THE FIRST CHINESE-YANKEE SHOEMAKERS.

These were the first Chinamen ever brought into New England, and the northern states as well, for labor, the first in the country to be taught a skilled trade, and Berkshire County enterprise and courage accomplished this feat. Although these Celestials celebrated their religious and national feasts on the Sampson grounds, especially making their observance of New Year's noticeable with Chinese lanterns, bombs and fire crackers, they were never disturbed. This action completely broke up the St. Crispin Society locally, and it was not long before the Chinese and Americans were working together harmoniously, while it had the effect of disorganizing the

union in the northern states past all resurrection.

FIRST FALSE TEETH IN CHINA.

We are permitted to republish an interesting article lately written by Dr. William E. Brown, the founder of the Brown Sanatorium at North Adams, on the advent of the Chinese in Berkshire, and now resident at Dansville, N. Y., who in the seventies was a practising dentist on Main St., who administered nitrous oxide gas to the first Chinamen who ever breathed it, and for whom he made a set of false teeth. This Chinaman soon after returned to the Celestial Empire where he exhibited the first set of false molars ever seen in that country.

CELESTIAL ADVENT INTO NORTH ADAMS.

There was great excitement that day in June, 1870, when a telegram announced that the Chinamen, who were to take the places of the striking Crispins, would arrive on the train due at 10 a. m., from San Francisco. The station and yard was crowded with angered strikers, and idlers, the former with threats of violence, and it was a question of courage on the part of the officers and citizens, who stood against mob law under any and all circumstances. As the China boys alighted from the train and started for the shop, some half mile away, it was a thrilling sight. The seventy-five Chinamen with their goods upon their shoulders in bundles and bags, presented a picture that any person who witnessed it will ever remember. Geo. W. Chase, of the Sampson Mfg. Co., was at their head, flanked by officers of the town, supplemented by state constables. As they started up the street, howls, threats of vengeance and cat calls made the route anything but assuring to the peaceable boys from the Celestial Empire. They paid no heed, following Mr. Chase, looking neither to the right nor left. The great crowd of strikers and followers threatened, but the officers were equal to it all, and aside from slight injuries received by a few from stones thrown by unknown persons, they reached the Sampson Shoe Shop, which had been fitted up for their abiding place.

THEIR APPEARANCE AND QUARTERS.

The shop is a very large, square building, with an inner court. The two eastern stories of this side had been fitted up with bunks. In these rooms these Celestials were housed and fed during the ten years of their working in this shop, and so conducted themselves as to very speedily win the confidence of the people at large and also of the shoe-makers in town, whose places they had come from the Orient to fill. This procession was unlike anything ever seen

in the east. Each boy was dressed in the garb of the lower grade or caste of the Chinese, blue jean blouse, wide flowing trousers and felt shoes with heavy felt soles. Theseshoes of lighter material and more elaborate became the vogue with the young women who became the teachers of these Mongolians the same year. Quoting from the Springfield Republican, Oct. 7, 1871, the correspondent says, "The Chinese question, so far as our town is concerned, is settled, and they wander through the streets, after working hours, unmolested, scarcely noticed." On last Sunday afternoon twenty-five young ladies and gentlemen spent an hour at their quarters teaching them. Their Sunday school will be continued through the season. After working hours, any evening, groups of Chinamen may be seen gathered around some little girl, who is teaching them to read and speak our language."

CHARLEY SING GREATER THAN MINISTER WU.

Quoting still farther, "The shop was visited one day this week by a Chinese merchant from San Francisco, who did not manifest a very commendable spirit while among his countrymen, passing them by without a look of recognition, to the evident disgust of the men, who manifested their dissatisfaction by groans, etc., which were quickly suppressed by a look from Charley Sing, the interpreter. Minister Wu was not greater than he." During this year seventy-five more Chinamen were added, and their coming elicited not a murmur. At this time the Chinese were paid by the piece the same as the workmen in other shops, before this having been under contract (and men stigmatized as slaves.) This solved the labor problem to the satisfaction of all concerned. This shop employed about three hundred and fifty hands at this time, later on more than one hundred were added, making the largest shoe shop in this part of the state. A Crispin leader said, speaking of these Chinese shoemakers, "No one hundred and fifty men of any nationality could live together as these Chinamen are doing without having trouble among themselves, from drinking, etc." The rate of loss of time among these men was much less than among any class of workmen. Mr. Chase said it was too small to mention. Many of them attended church and Sunday School, and learned to play upon the organ, and for some time played during the session of the Sabbath School in the Baptist church. Several became members of the Baptist church and it is said that the first Chinaman who received Christian burial in this country died at North Adams and was buried from the Baptist church. This funeral procession was very interesting, every Chinamen dressed

in white, and made a most imposing body as they followed their dead to 'Hillside Cemetery.' When they completed their work at North Adams, the bodies of their countrymen, six in all, who had died while there, were shipped to San Francisco, and from thence to China.

INTERESTING FACTS.

On the Chinese New Year the boys made merry on a large scale, celebrating by firing hundreds of bunches of fire-crackers wound around a long pole protruding from the second story window, and a terrible din was the result. Their band gave concerts and they gave a great banquet in the shop. Friends and teachers gathered and made merry. Their sweetmeats and fruits were very fine, and their Chinese Chef was a first-class cook. After a year or two, a great many of them used a knife and fork at table in place of chop-sticks. Their food was of the best. A load of baker's bread came to the shop every day. Meats, especially small pigs, chickens and other fowls were used freely. Many of them cut their queues, and wore American clothing, and conformed to our habits. Lue Gang Gine resides at North Adams still, a naturalized citizen, a member of the Baptist church, has lived in one of the first families, is much respected, well to do, going to Florida every year, where he manages an orange grove. Charley Sing, the interpreter, resides in New York, being interpreter for the Courts, also holding a similar position under the Governor. Many of these boys saved money enough to live on their income in China. Thirty of the Chinamen paid taxes, and all the others were minors. The following is a list of tax payers' names taken by the assessor: Charley Sing, James Chung, Pin Yug Ling, Ah Foo Aug, Toy Sing Chin, A Lang Gonn, Ah Fuee Lee, King Yok Aug, Ah Yong Louie, Ah Shoe Ham, Ah Fook Aug, Hog Toy Low, Ah Dive Low, Nang Moover Low, Hing Wang Lee, Ah Hane Ling, Gee Tuck Low, Sam Queen Low, Ah Gon Row, Ah May Low, Gis Lie Lee, See Kong Ching, Ah Hell Yah, Toy Foo Young, Sen Gu Lee, King Tak Chung, Hag Hane Low, Kong Nap Wang, Ah Quom Low, Ah Tune Chung, Ah Deng Lee, Ah Lee Chung.

A patron of "The Berkshire Hills" writes: "You have enough work to keep you busy the balance of your days. The field broadens more and more and I hope you may live to see the work well done up to a point where a younger man can take it up as the most interesting and valuable publication old Berkshire County has ever known, or ever can know."