

'Firsts' Have Marked City's Industry Scene

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To describe Dover in its industrial history, one could well call it a "city of firsts."

For, since 1840, Dover has been exactly that, at least as far as Tuscarawas County is concerned. In that year, the town had the highest population in the county, 598 persons, and was recognized as the center of trade, commerce and industry. It has never lost that position.

Though its population of 11,800 by the unofficial 1964 census is 2,000 less than that of the county seat of New Philadelphia, its tax valuation in the same year was almost \$5 million higher than its sister city's.

Business authorities, without hesitation, attribute Dover's leadership to the constant establishment of new and expansion of old industries within its limits.

Fifteen years after its foundation in 1807, Dover was still described by one early newspaper editor as a "sickly city" with a mere population of 46 people. In 20 years, as we have said, that figure was 5 times greater. At the turn of the century, the city had increased to 5,422 residents.

Since then, the population gained another thousand or more by 1910. In 10 more years, in 1920, it shot up to 8,101, or a 44 per cent increase in the 2 decades. During the depression era in the 1930's, the census was decreased almost 500.

Now with the population nearing the 12,000 mark, Dover's industry last year had a taxable real estate valuation of \$2,821,450 (lands, \$238,910; structures, \$2,582,540). This valuation represents about 40 per cent of the total worth, and does not include the equipment and other assets of the individual companies.

If one looks for one simple cause for Dover's early success, he must immediately select the building of the Ohio Canal, completed in Tuscarawas County in 1830.

By good fortune, the canal was located on the west side of the Tuscarawas River, and its slow waters washed on the very boundaries of the tiny village, seeming to cause it to grow overnight.

By another stroke of fortune, Dover was designated as the only tariff collection port of the Ohio Canal in the county. This meant that practically all commercial business and trading would be cleared at that point.

The canal collector's report for just the period from April 10 to Nov. 25, 1842, as publicized in the local paper read: "The collector at Canal Dover (as the town was to be known until Dec. 18, 1915) reported 333,888 bushels of wheat cleared; 39,000 barrels of flour shipped. Total receipts: \$25,819.19."

This short report points out a significant fact about the early business history of the town, namely, that it was chiefly a flour-milling and grain produc-

ing center at least for the first 20 years.

The flour mills of Dover were unequaled in that period, and their history continues right up to the present day with the Dover Milling Co. on W. 2nd St.

Dover's founder, Christian Deardorff, actually lived outside the town limits until 1830, operating a grist mill on Sugar Creek. Because he donated 100 acres and 4 town lots to the Canal Commission and had lost his water power at his old mill because of the canal, Deardorff was granted water rights on the canal itself.

There on the towpath he built a flour mill which his heirs sold to Edmund Burnett at the time of his death in 1851. Burnett, in turn, sold the mill 20 years later to Gintz & Parr Co.

Two years later, these two men turned the mill over to Alonzo and William Hardesty, who renamed it the Cascade Mills.

Deardorff's original mill remained as a part of the Hardesty interests until the flood of 1913 swept it away.

The Hardesty business, however, remained, with 2 other mills still in operation.

Back in 1842 the Dover City Mill was also built on the canal by Nathaniel and Eliza Welty, who operated it until it was destroyed by fire in 1859. Dover's later mayor, Simpson Har-mount, and Hayden rebuilt it a year later and then sold it to Thomas Hardesty, father of the 2 men named above.

When he died, in 1869, it also



From beginning of the century to 1930, American Sheet & Tin Co., was a main part of metal backbone of Dover's industry. The complex shown here lay along S. Tuscarawas Ave. and W. Broadway. The area is now occupied by the Dover City Garage, part of General Electric and Twin Cities Concrete.

passed into their hands, giving them their second mill. Then, in 1876, they built the mill, which still remains in operation on West 2nd St.

The Hardesty brothers dominated the local milling business for many years, developing even an export trade, some of which is still retained by Dover Milling Co., which operates the Hardesty Mill on W. 2nd St.

Dover continued as a wheat market and flour mill center until late 1850's, when the building of the first railroads began to take away the important business from the Ohio Canal.

Fortunately, the town's businessmen were alert enough to see the changes of the times. Already, in 1851, \$20,000 had been subscribed by business leaders in the area to get a 32-mile branch of the Cleveland & Pittsburgh Railroad (later part of the Pennsylvania system, from Bayard in Columbiana County to Dover-New Philadelphia. The extension was completed in 1854 and a new kind of industrial life was born in Dover.

The birth of the iron industry can be attributed to the hard labor and generosity of Dover citizens. In fact, those people today who object to contributing monies to invite outside industry and business into the area, might learn well from the early history of Dover.

As they did for the railroad, so business men again in Dover subscribed \$75,000 to the building of the first blast furnace in county history, located at the bottom of W. 3rd St. From its erection in 1854, the smokestack of that furnace marked the heart of Dover's industrial progress.

The furnace's story continued until its abandonment in 1927 when the owner, Hanna Furnace Coal Co. of Cleveland, suspended its operations in the city. But during most of those

years, the furnace provided most of the ore material for the expanding iron and steel businesses which assured Dover of its continued industrial success and leadership.

In truth, the furnace at first proved to be an unsuccessful venture for its subscribers, men like the wealthy Augustus Wilhelm, builder of what is now the Children's Home, even going bankrupt.

As a result, the furnace was sold to an eastern firm, known as the Green Brothers Co. and remained under that name until 1864.

In that year, Tuscarawas Iron & Coal Co. was incorporated and took over the operation of the furnace, making it a financial success. The company rebuilt and increased the furnaces capacity to 3 times its original production.

Three years later Dover citizens put up half of a \$200,000 capital stock and together with a group of Pennsylvanians bought the furnace and regained its control as the Pennsylvania Iron & Coal Co.

In addition, mines were opened in Fairfield, Auburn and Jefferson Townships to supply about three-fourths of all the ore used in the production of the soft-fluid metal which found a wide spread market because of its superiority for foundry purposes.

Doverites again saved the business after the panic of 1883 by buying a \$30,000 bond to finance the rebuilding and re-opening of the plant in 1894.

Finally, in 1905, Mark Hanna, well known already to the city as a political leader and Cleveland industrialist, purchased the plant and kept it in operation in connection with his Hanna Furnace Co. until 1927.

We called Dover "a city of firsts." This title is based on the events during the 1860's, when 4 new kinds of industries

were established within the city.

In 1862, the Dover Boiler Works was built on W. 3rd St. across from the blast furnace by B. D. Downey, John Slacker and J. H. Barnhill. That plant has had a notable history, finally turning into what is now Shenango-Penn.

In 1866, Dover citizens again invested \$80,000 to build the Dover Rolling Mills, first of the kind in the county. While at the start, the mill had a precarious existence, its purchase in 1882 by Jeremiah E. Reeves made it the ancestor of the city's wealthiest and largest industry today.

Also, in 1866, another first industry was begun, the salt mills. Its 10-year history will be described in a separate story.

Then, in 1869, at the site of what is now Midway Lumber Co. on S. Tuscarawas Ave., local citizens dug up money to finance the Dover Fire Brick Co., the first of its kind in the county and an important relative to the iron and steel industry.

In a kind of accident, the fire clay which was to become the material for the whole clay industry in the county, was found when people from the local blast furnace went digging for kidney ore on French Hills Farm.

Of all industries in Dover, the most important, undoubtedly, has been, is and will continue to be the iron and steel business. The story of the Reeves Mills and later of Greer Steel has often been told. Here we merely attempt to straighten out the chronology and geography of the business.

As noted above, Jeremiah E. Reeves purchased the citizen-owned rolling mill in 1883. His brother, Jabez, had been superintendent at the Ward Rolling Mill in New Philadelphia when he heard of the opportunity to purchase the Dover Mill and

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