

Madison Industries From 1800's to Present Day
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Reported in paper by Lettie Ross

A recent Fortnightly Club program featured several papers on Madison's history including one on Madison industries presented by Mrs. Lettie Ross, in which she went back to late 1700 and early 1800, when this section was first settled.

Madison was first called Chapintown, later changed to Centerville; the following information was obtained by Mrs. Ross from various sources.

The first settlement, which became Madison, was recorded in 1802, settled mostly by easterners many of whom had come from Connecticut by oxcart, wagon, or on foot. As the settlers multiplied, a need was felt for a gristmill, so the first one was built by Jerome Emerson's grandfather on Grand River in 1809. Later it was operated by Sheperd Wooliver, and then by the Adlards. The dam used for the mill has since washed out. There was also the Treet mill on the Dock Rd.

The discovery of ridges of iron ore in the northern part of the township led to the Arcole blast furnaces located south of what is now Route 20 and which employed as many as 2000 workers in 1831. This influx of workers made Madison about the size of Painesville in 1840.

An iron foundry, located at Genung's Corners, was still in operation fifty years ago. This plant in later years manufactured the Iron King Cultivators. The settlement of Little Elensbury at the end of Dock Road became Madison Dock and the first steamer west of Buffalo was built there, with the last boat being launched in 1860.

Ye Old Tavern was built in 1812, at Unionville, and was one of the stations for the Underground Railway with many slaves being sheltered there.

Cleveland's Cider Mill, where a mountain of apples, during the fall, were made into cider, boiled-cider, and vinegar and shipped all over the United States, was situated a mile east of town. After Mr. Cleveland's death, his wife and daughter carried on the business until 1932.

Also of interest of these early times is the fact that George Harper, who lived north of the N.Y.C. tracks at Unionville, invented the first clam shovel, also a process for sealing barrels.

In those early days there were six distilleries in the township and the product was used as legal tender, for there was no money. People went to the brewery for yeast to make bread, a welcome change from salt rising.

A carding mill, cloth designing mill and Madison Woolen Mills were located at the present sight of the Madison Willow Craft, later changed into a feed mill.

There was a chair factory on the northeast corner of the park and four tanneries in the township, one owned by Elisha Wood, located on the property now owned by Oliver Bates.

Mr. Sunderland had a tin shop where Gottlieb Keener now lives and they made all kinds of tin utensils. Mr. Norville had a feather-renovating establishment on East Main Street, east of Hattie Ritscher's place.

The first locomotive passed through Madison in 1852, when there was only one track, later made into four tracks. Then the Nickle Plate came along building two tracks.

Madison's surrounding rural area became famous for growing onions and potatoes, with Al Benjamin, E.G. St. John, both of Madison, and Mr. Jay Goddard of Unionville, buying and shipping many carloads to all parts of the country until the blight made onion raising unprofitable.

Edward Dayton engaged in buying cows and calves for shipment to the Cleveland stockyards. He herded them into an enclosure at the tracks until train time and their bawls filled the air and could be heard for a long distance.

Following the oxen drawn vehicles came the horse and buggy days or the "Gay Nineties", as we often hear them called. It was at this time that the Madison Wheel Shop came into being, located north of the tracks. The business was under the management of Thomas Foley, who did a thriving business until the "fliver" came into being, and now industry cannot seem to get along without our motorized vehicles of various types.

The C.P. and E. Street Car Company, operated a line from Cleveland to Ashtabula from 1990 to 1927 and aside from civilian traffic, it carried milk and eggs into the city from the farming areas.

There were several blacksmith shops in town to shoe the oxen and horses, but these are now extinct hereabouts, ending with the one operated by Eli Whipple, who gave up his shop and carried his forge and anvil to the horse via truck. At the time of his death a few years back, Mr. Whipple was tending to the shoeing of the horses at the Lake County Fairgrounds.

There were, at one time, at least three large sugar bushes in the township, operated by Harry Rand, G.G. Griswold, and S.J. Ross. These helped to keep the community sweetened up.

After the onion raising business was discontinued, farmers took to raising fruit, grapes and vegetables, leading to the now popular roadside stands, where such produce is sold. It also has led to truck farming, with many a truckload of produce being taken into the city for consumption.

The Williams Edward Co. built a large plant north of the railroad, now known as Edwards Street, they did a big business in processing cabbage and tomatoes and shipped by the carload all over the country.

In 1934, a new company, the Madison Winery, occupied these buildings for several years, but are now occupied by the Floyd A. Holes Co., manufacturers of plastic and aluminum foil bags, from small sizes to large enough to hold a fuselage of a plane.

The U.S. Cocoa Mat Corp. built a plant on Edwards St. and is doing a thriving business. It is understood there is only one other such plant in the United States. They manufacture cocoa mats for doorsteps in various sizes and for various purposes.

The Euclid Electric and Manufacturing Co. of Euclid, Ohio built a large plant on the north side of Edwards St., bringing their personnel with them, but employing many local people in the factory. They are manufacturers of control equipment, such as manual drum switch controls, magnetic type controls, push buttons, plugging switches, resistors and special purpose controls. They are used in the following industries; steel mills, rubber mills, machine tool plants, crane and hoist plants, general and material handling industries. Their products are shipped to foreign countries as well as being used in the United States. The company now employs 120, including shop, office, and management personnel. The business first got its start in a barn in Euclid in 1919 and moved to Madison in November of 1947. It brought several fine families to Madison who have been a credit to the community. C.S. Ettenger is president, J.L. Evans, secretary and treasurer, H.G. Shrock, executive vice president, and C.J. Rowels, vice president and sales manager.

Perfection Pipe Nipple Co., located on the east side of North Lake St., north of the railroad, manufactures nipples for plumbing, heating, automotive piping and other industrial uses. They employ 65 men and women. They also leased the feed mill site first operated by the Farmers Cooperative, later by D.R. Smead and then by Mayhew Feed & Fuel. The company is noted for its beautiful Christmas displays and for their flowerbeds and nice lawns in the summer. S.J. Jacobson is president of the company.

The Madison Lumber Co. is under the management of Stewart Chubb, formerly by B.R. Winchester, who retired a few years back.

The Bennett Manufacturing & Development Co. on Route 20 east, does development work on tools and dies.

Madison's newest industry is the Madison Electric Products, with R.B. McIntosh as promoter and manager. Their product is electric tachometers, a speed indicator, a device operated electrically to regulate the different speeds on machines.

Last, but by no means least, is the Madison Willowcraft, a \$50,000 corporation, incorporated in 1908 by the Madison Basket Craft. It was reorganized in 1928, with the name being changed to Madison Willowcraft. They manufacture art-craft baskets, a

complete line of metal and willow floral baskets and they maintain a department for refinishing and painting wicker furniture.

There is the Madison Press, ready to do all your printing and advertising, with Mrs. Alta H. Reigert, as owner, editor and publisher.

The first bank was organized in Madison 1875, with the building, lot, furniture and fixtures totaling \$4,350. It was reorganized in 1934 with John T. Jones as cashier.

And of course, there are several beauty salons in the town, along with numerous other businesses, including hardware, groceries, insurance, drugs, service stations, dry goods, dry cleaning, five to one dollar, barber shops, etcetera.