

# PLAINWELL'S PAPER MAKING INDUSTRY.

The Great New Mill of the Michigan Paper Company a Valued Improvement--Metropolitan in Appearance and Up-to-Date in Equipment.



JOHN W. GIBLEY

## GREAT CONSUMPTION OF PAPER

Plainwell the Heart of a Heavy Producing Section. The measure of a people's enlightenment is accurately indicated by its consumption of paper. By almost no other means is intelligence disseminated and learning perpetuated. In any other way can the written or printed thought be transmitted to posterity. The spoken word perishes when the atmospheric vibrations it sets in motion are stilled, or the brain that conceives and transmits it no longer

of middle age to be able to recall the time before paper was manufactured in this village. The old Lyon & Page mill, a wooden structure, stood on the river bank at the foot of Mill street. It was torn down several years ago, after a good many years of profitable operation. The school children of the '70's used to take their pennies to this mill and exchange them for sheets of "printing paper" on which to figure out their arithmetical and algebraic problems. They applied at the old finishing room, where George Stamp counted the snowy sheets with what seemed marvelous rapidity. When their purchase was made it not infrequently happened that Superintendent J. W. Shepard would permit them to go back through the steamy, dripping machine room, to the lofty apartment at the west end of the building, where "Bill" Countryman worked in and around the two big

Secretary—H. H. Everard, Kalamazoo  
Treasurer—C. A. Peck, Kalamazoo  
Directors—H. W. Page, H. H. Everard, C. A. Peck, J. W. Hicks, Wm. H. Thomas, J. W. Gilkey and J. D. Wag-

The fact that some of these gentlemen did not take shares of stock in which they had subscribed, was the cause of another election of officers within a short time, the important changes made being that Morrison Bailey was made secretary and George G. Soule treasurer.

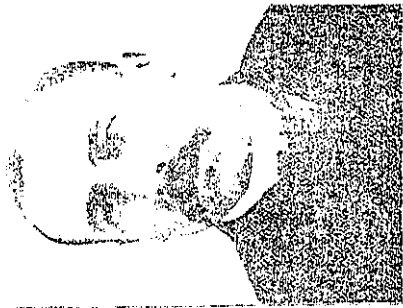
Early in February the company received its charter from the state and acquired the deeds to the Page and Corby real estate and water rights. A contract was soon made with Smith & Winchester of South Windham, Conn., for a \$12,000 Fourdrinier paper machine. As soon as the weather permitted in

nine months of time was occupied in the erection of the plant and the installation of machinery, the first spool of earth being turned March 29, 1906, and the first paper coming over the new machines February 16, 1907. The company lays no claim to having the largest mill in the vicinity, but is satisfied to know that it has one that is a model of its size—convenient, light, convenient and easy to work in. Its total cost was in the neighborhood of \$250,000.

The citizens of Plainwell have been interested in this company and proud of its progress all through its career. This is owing, doubtless, to the fact that a good proportion of the stock is owned by local people, as well as to the knowledge that the institution is of direct benefit in a financial way and a potent factor in the upbuilding of the village.

## THE GREAT PAPER MACHINES.

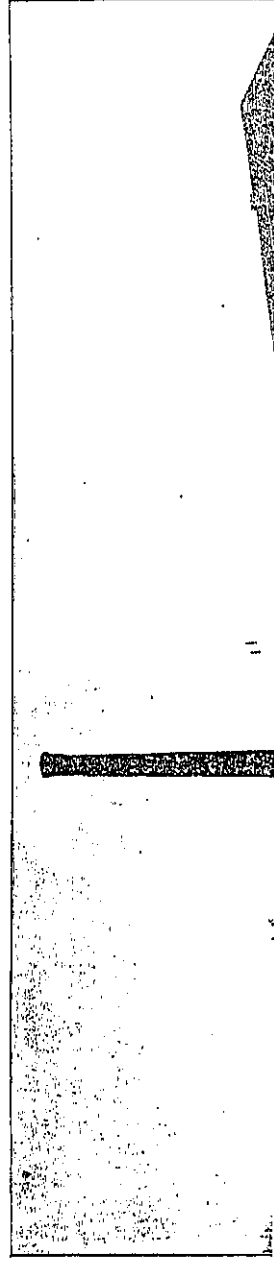
Company Has Two of the Best in the State. And now our journey carries us forward from the various preparatory departments, into that section of this immense plant, wherein are located those mighty Leviathans of modern industrial genius, the paper making machines, wherein the already liquid mass is formed and finished into the perfected sheet of paper and made

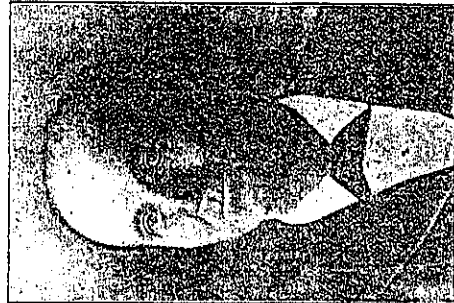


WILLIAM THOMAS.

wide for a wire 110 inches in width and 60 feet long. It has an adjusting device for raising and lowering the Breast Roll end of the Fourdrinier part above and below the horizontal level, perfected arrangements for properly supporting and carrying the Deckle Straps, and improved end truss carriages for preventing unnecessary endwise movement of the Table Rolls.

The Shake Drive is of the lock-step type, free from all of the intricate gears and screws of other makes, b





THE LATE JOSEPH W. HICKS.

sheets and written epistles so common among all the people. All this calls for a vast production of paper that the demand may be met, and means an industry enlisting large amounts of capital, operating scores of mills from one end of the country to the other, devouring astonishing quantities of raw material and affording employment for thousands of men of the medium and higher grades of skill and intelligence.

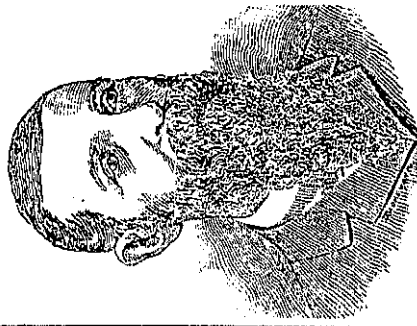
Southwestern Michigan is well-known as the producer of large quantities of paper ranging from straw wrapping to the finer writing papers for fashionable correspondence. This particular section seems to be the heart of the paper producing region, as within a radius of 13 miles of Plainwell there are 14 large paper companies, controlling at least 18 immense mills and producing an aggregate of about 100 tons of paper each day.

A person must be well-versed in the

the door and dirt from them and made them fit for their transformation into pulp and finally into the white sheets. This old mill was a pioneer of its class in this part of the country, the only others existing hereabouts in its early years being a straw wrapping mill in Allegan and the old Kalamazoo Paper Co.'s mill in that city.

**BEGINNINGS OF THE COMPANY.**

Organization of Michigan Paper Company and its Early Days.  
The Michigan Paper Company of Plainwell (to give the company its full legal appellation) came into being on Monday, January 10, 1837, after a deal of effort on the part of several men sincerely interested in promoting the prosperity of the village. The persons who had subscribed to the



THE LATE GEORGE H. ANDERSON.

capital stock of \$50,000 met at the Exchange bank, effected an organization and elected the following officers:  
President—Hale W. Page, Kalamazoo.  
Vice President—J. W. Hicks.

ware was of wood, covered with galvanized iron.

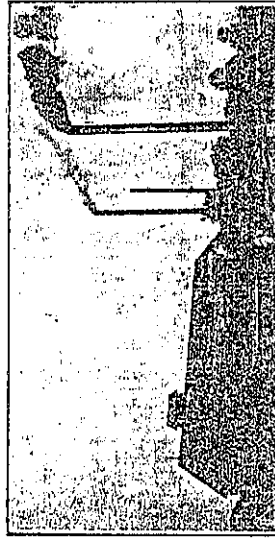
On May 17 of the same year the company's first president, Hale W. Page, died at his home in Kalamazoo, at the age of 71 years. He had been a member of the old firm of Lyon & Page, and was one of the heaviest stockholders in the Michigan Paper Co. The vacancy in the office of president caused by his death was filled by the appointment of his nephew, H. P. Kautler, also of Kalamazoo.

The first paper came off the machines August 17, and four days later The Enterprise used 1,000 sheets of it in printing a special papermill edition. Before the mill had been in operation a month its product was being used by the Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, Michigan Tradesman and Allegan Gazette. In September the Detroit Tribune published a full description of the mill and counted it one of the seven most important in the state.

**THE NEW PAPER MILL.**

Its Great Buildings Would be Creditable to Any City.

From small beginnings the plant of the Michigan Paper Co. has grown to its present size and importance—a group of eight large brick buildings that would be a credit to the manufacturing district of a much larger municipality than Plainwell. The several structures are two and three stories in height, with high basements, and the whole group is surmounted by a great brick smokestack that pierces the air to a height of 150 feet. About



In the Twentieth Century.

It is not our purpose here to enter into the details of the manufacture of paper, as it is a process with which most of our readers are as familiar as we. But the facility with which raw material from which paper is made in this mill old papers of various kinds being used exclusively is bandied, and the ease and celerity with which the various processes are performed, prove very interesting to the observer.

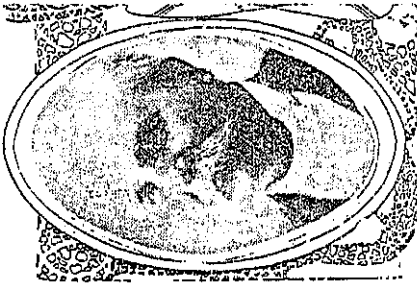
Old newspapers, books, magazines, the contents of waste baskets in business offices in distant cities, trimmings from the cutters in big printing establishments and paper in a thousand and one forms is the material which this mill eats up in large quantities, and it is delivered in bales on the platform outside the stockhouse doors by the G. R. & I. railroad, using for the purpose the spur track, put in two years ago. In this building the basement and first and second floors are reserved for the storage of these bales.

The third floor in this building is entirely occupied by the sorting. Here the bales of old paper are opened, separated and the contents thrown a little at a time upon an endless apron, which carries them into the dusters. There are three of these in a room by themselves adjoining the sorting room on the north. From the dusters the cleaned papers go into another room, and from whence they are furnished, as required, to the four digesters on the floor below. The digesters are run by water power. From these the mater-

agating of one various chemicals have been perfected in the other separate departments, the paper machines must still be relied upon to furnish the finished product in a state suitable for the acceptance of the consumer.

This Machine Room contains two machines, one of the straight Fourdrinier type, the other of the Harper Fourdrinier type. Since the mind of the French workman, Louis Robert, first conceived the idea of the Fourdrinier machine over one hundred years ago, no handsomer nor more ingenious patterns of this celebrated modern wonder have ever been placed in any paper manufacturing plant, than are these.

These machines were designed and built by the Smith & Winchester Manufacturing Co., of South Windham, Conn., a concern having over seventy-



THE LATE GEORGE G. SOULE.

five years of experience in this line of work, the pioneer builders of this type of machine, a concern which equipped the first mill which contained a Fourdrinier machine in this country. All of the standard apparatus used in the present day manufacture of paper was originally conceived and put to practical demonstration in the workshops of this company, and their designs have always been the ground-work for the several copies being built.

URIN J. WOODARD.  
Right of every workman in the M especially in such hurried times as occasion the changing of jackets or trousers. There are two pairs of main Press Rolls with top rolls encased in metal shells, and bottom rolls covered with rubber. The Press housings contain the same devices for raising top rolls as are used on the Couché. These devices are patented.

The Press frames and equipments are arranged for top and bottom feeds of 40 feet in length each.

There are twenty cast-iron Drye each 48 inches in diameter by inches of face, arranged in two tiers upper and lower, each Dryer equipped with the most modern type of steering joint and safety valve. There are a supplied automatic felt-tighteners maintaining a perfect and even tension on the felts at all times.

There are two stacks of Calenda each containing eight chilled iron rollers inches face, housed in modern frames, having improved lifting devices, and each roll being equipped with the Smith Patented Calend Feed.

The Reel is of the Upright Drum type with slip-belt drive, contains the latest improved devices for lateral and endwise adjustments. The Slitter is of the Down-Down