

THE GREAT SLATER MILLS AT WEBSTER

Founded in Pawtucket in 1790. Established in Webster in 1812.

CENTENNIAL 1912

THE SLATER WEBSTER CENTENNIAL.
One hundred years ago Samuel Slater, one of the most picturesque of the American pioneers—perhaps the most picturesque of the country's industrial forefathers, established the first Slater mill at Webster, Massachusetts. He had already, in 1790, founded a cotton spinning business at Pawtucket, Rhode Island. His aim was the first commercially successful textile mill in America. Its beginning was that of the oldest manufacturing home in the New World, now S. Slater & Sons, Incorporated. Various influences impelled Mr. Slater to remove his business to a country neighborhood, and at Webster he built up the substantial foundation of what has been ever since one of the great textile manufacturing works of the world. The history of the business is that of the textile industry of the United States, is that of the republic, for it was established when the United States had but just come into existence as an independent country. Each step in the industrial and financial progress of the nation is represented in the career of this house. Its own history is divided into four periods.

The first began with the emigration of the youthful Samuel Slater from England, sent to the inventor who was well grounded in his knowledge, a virgin soil which would produce most profitable harvests. Apparently he dared tell no one his plans. Certainly neither his mother nor his brothers learned of his intention until he was on the ocean. The English Government was guarding its industries with a most jealous care. The sting of the Revolution still smarted. No skilled mechanic was permitted to leave the country. No machinery was sold abroad. No person could take passage for the United States without being submitted to a thorough search, and severe punishment awaited one who would attempt to smuggle knowledge in tangible shape across the Atlantic. It is no wonder, then, that Samuel Slater decided to keep his secret. Moreover, it was characteristic of the man that he confided in few. He could take with him neither drawing, nor model, nor sample. His brain carried his entire stock in trade.

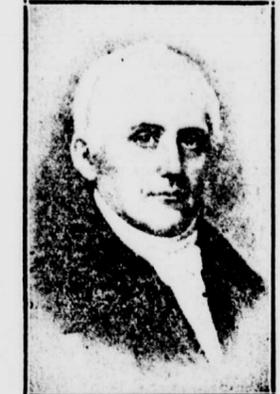
Reaching America he soon became known to Moses Brown of Providence, the founder of Brown University, and a year later was operating the first American machine embodying the Arkwright inventions. Previously some attempts had been made by Americans to produce jennies and bobbins for the spinning of cotton, but none had been successful. The jenny could not be woven into cloth. The power loom had

in 1858, he managed the business, developing it with rapidity and solidity. Horatio N. Slater was a remarkable man. He had great executive ability. He inherited the mechanical genius of his father and invented improvements to his plans of machinery, principally with his own hands, and on the 20th of December following he started three cards, drawing and roving, and twenty-two spindles, which were worked by an old fulling mill water wheel in a clothiers' building, in which they continued spinning about twenty months, at the expiration of which time they had several thousand pounds of yarn on hand, notwithstanding every exertion was used to weave it up and sell it.

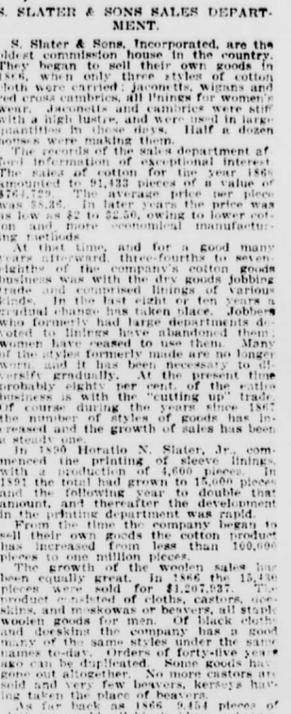
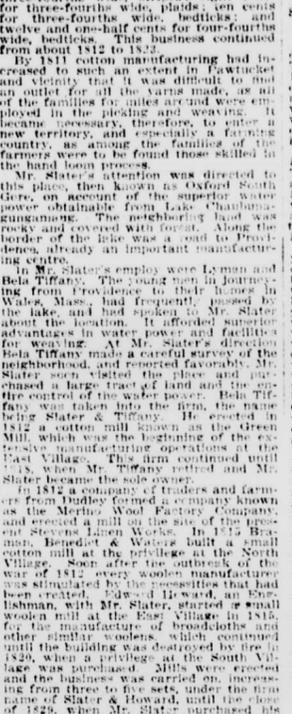
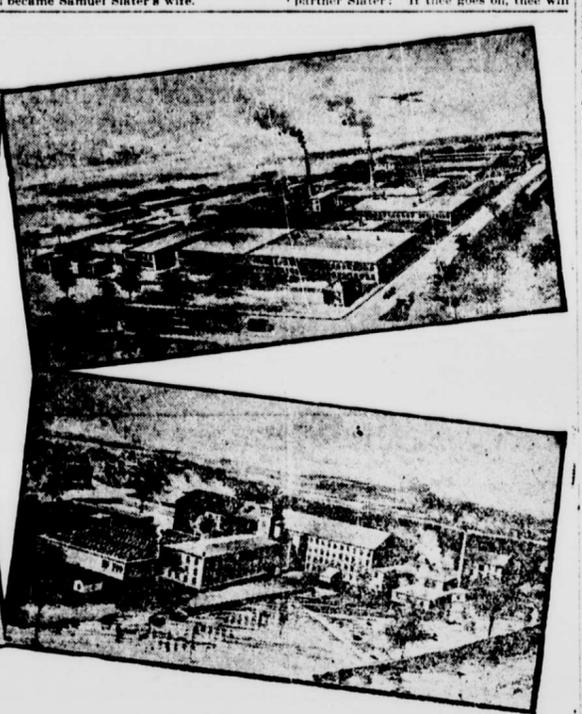
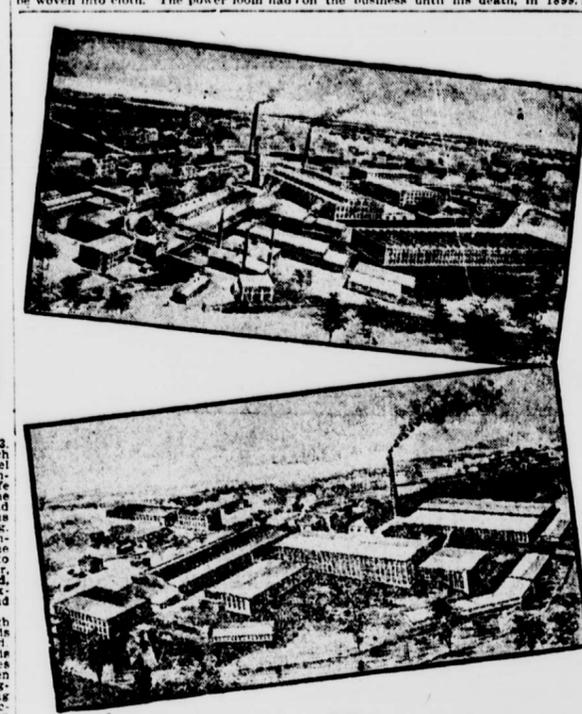
Early in the year 1792 Almy, Brown and Slater built a small factory in the village in which they set in motion July 12 the preparatory and seventy-two mules, and slowly added to that number as the sales of the yarn appeared more promising, which induced the said Slater to be concerned in erecting a new mill, and to increase the machinery in the old mill.

Mr. Slater was fortunate in coming into contact with the Wilkinson family. The daughters made themselves famous by their invention of the cotton sewing thread. The men were mechanics as expert as any who could be found in the New England of the day, and were of vast assistance to the inventor. A daughter became Samuel Slater's wife.

swore: "If thou canst do what thou sayst I will give thee to come to Rhode Island and have the credit and advantage of introducing cotton spinning. Rhode Island would have seemed to be the best place for the enterprise, for it was not in the Union as yet."
The firm Almy, Brown and Slater was formed and started the manufacture of cotton goods in Pawtucket in all the perfection of the best mills in England. Samuel Slater sent some yarn to his old master, who pronounced them as good as any. They were made from German cotton, longer than our present Sea Island and in fibre like silk.
"Cotton sewing thread was unknown in England and we are indebted to the Wilkinson women in Pawtucket for the idea which initiated the invention. Using the yarn which had been spun in Pawtucket for a year and a half, these women of a family remarkable for mechanical ingenuity conceived the idea of a thread which should take the place of linen. They twisted the yarns on their domestic spinning wheel and made the first cotton thread in 1792. The manufacturing was established by Wilkinson Brothers.
"When the first panic in the American market for cotton goods occurred, some 5,000 or 6,000 pounds had accumulated and the supply had outrun the demand. Almy and Brown, who were partners with Slater: "If this goes on, they will



SAMUEL SLATER
Father of American Manufacture.
in 1750, and ended with his death, in 1832. This may be called the romantic epoch of the business, for the story of Samuel Slater is a remarkable series of accomplishments very rarely found in the life of one man. Apprenticed to Strutt, the associate of the great Arkwright, he had mastered the machinery of the New World which had revolutionized cotton spinning. He had the mechanical instinct and training which permitted him to build the machines himself under what proved to be the most adverse conditions. Moreover, he knew how the machines should be used, for he had a thorough knowledge of textile manufacturing, acquired in a long and thorough apprenticeship.



FIRST COTTON MILL IN AMERICA
FOUNDED IN PAWTUCKET IN 1790 BY SAMUEL SLATER.
of those engaged in the business was voiced in an interview between Samuel and his employes.
"Before the boy entered into his apprenticeship he asked Mr. Strutt whether he considered it permanent business. The older man replied, 'It is not probable, Samuel, that it will always be as good as it is now, but I have no doubt it will always be a fair business if it is well managed.' This was not so conservative an opinion as it appears to one looking back from the present day, for Paul had not then invented the printing cylinder, naturally the boy was influenced by the revealing estimate of conditions, and when he read the advertisement of an American society, published in a Philadelphia newspaper, offering a reward for the invention of textile machinery, to accomplish what Arkwright had done, he determined that the United States pro-

not come into use. Yarn which Slater manufactured were woven by hand in households, which was a great reason why Webster was chosen as the site of the new mill, for the farmer's home constituted a very important factor in manufacturing. In 1810, twenty years after his spindles were set to work at Pawtucket, there were over one hundred cotton mills in operation, all constructed after his model.

In 1815, in response to a public demand, Samuel Slater's genius was again put to work, and he erected at Webster the first woolen mill in America, soon to begin the manufacture of uniform coats. At an early date the United States called upon him to supply the cloth for the army and navy, and to this day uniforms seen in America can usually trace back their history to the first Slater woolen mill.

Mr. Slater lived to operate and see the importance of the Webster mills until 1832, which is the beginning of the second period.

In many ways this epoch was full as important as the first. It was dominated by the great Horatio N. Slater. He had been taken into the firm by his father in 1829. Four years later he had assumed what was substantially the full control of the industry.

For forty-five years, until his retirement

The fourth period is that of the management of the properties by the trustees, Charles O. Washburn, Amos Bartlett, and Frank Pickels Smith.

SAMUEL SLATER'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.
The life story of Samuel Slater up to his later years may be best told in the sketch of his career composed by himself for the Historical Society of Rhode Island.

Samuel Slater was born in the town of Belper, in the county of Derby, June 5th, 1768. On June 28th, 1782, being about 14 years of age, he went to live with Josiah Strutt, Esquire, in Milford near Holzer, the inventor of the Derby ribbed stocking machine, and several years a partner of Sir Richard Arkwright in the cotton spinning business, as a clerk, and who was then building a large factory at Milford, where said Slater continued until August, 1788. During four or five of the last years his time was solely devoted to the factory as general overseer, both as respected making machinery and the manufacturing department.

On the 1st day of September, 1789, he took his departure from Derbyshire for London, and on the 13th he sailed for New York, where he arrived in November, after a passage of 66 days. He left New York in January, 1790, for Providence and there made an arrangement with Messrs.

HIS SON'S ESTIMATE OF SAMUEL SLATER.
His son, Horatio N. Slater, the first, adds interesting color to his father's life, in the following reminiscence:
"The initial step toward cotton manufacturing in this country was taken when Slater and Strutt were located together in the interior of this country. Slater was obliged to seek families and induce them to emigrate to Pawtucket. He found one Arnold with a family of ten or eleven living near a small village a mile or two distant, made of shags, and with a chimney of stone. The roof of this comfortable structure sloped nearly to the ground, but it was the home of these hardy people. Mrs. Arnold accompanied Slater fully, for when her husband consulted her on the proposed change, she insisted that Mr. Slater should give them as good a home as their old one. The wages paid these operators ranged from one to \$1.25 and \$1.40 per week.
Pawtucket contained then not more than a dozen houses. There was no school and no church. Mr. Slater introduced the English apprentice system, but it did not suit the American temperament and was abandoned.
"Probably the invitation was that of the advertisement in the Philadelphia newspaper. The young man was then unknown in America.

spin up all our frames. (This is interpreted as meaning that the business would be ruined financially.)
In the sparse population one of the chief difficulties of the early manufacturing was in procuring operatives for the mill. The succeeding Slater's were located farther in the interior of this country, and Slater was obliged to seek families and induce them to emigrate to Pawtucket. He found one Arnold with a family of ten or eleven living near a small village a mile or two distant, made of shags, and with a chimney of stone. The roof of this comfortable structure sloped nearly to the ground, but it was the home of these hardy people. Mrs. Arnold accompanied Slater fully, for when her husband consulted her on the proposed change, she insisted that Mr. Slater should give them as good a home as their old one. The wages paid these operators ranged from one to \$1.25 and \$1.40 per week.
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ANDREW JACKSON'S VISIT.
The account of Gen. Andrew Jackson's visit to Samuel Slater was reported by a contemporaneous author, far volume published in 1826. In grandiloquent words he says:
"The present Chief Magistrate of the Union, in company with the Vice-President, visited Mr. Slater at his mill, known as the Merino Wool Factory Company, and erected a mill on the site of the present building. He was accompanied by Messrs. Benedict & Waters, built a small cotton mill at the village at the North Village, soon after the outbreak of the war of 1812 every woolen manufacturer was stimulated by the prospect that had been created. Slater and Howard, an Englishman, with Mr. Slater, started a small woolen mill at the East Village in 1816. Slater was obliged to seek families and induce them to emigrate to Pawtucket. He found one Arnold with a family of ten or eleven living near a small village a mile or two distant, made of shags, and with a chimney of stone. The roof of this comfortable structure sloped nearly to the ground, but it was the home of these hardy people. Mrs. Arnold accompanied Slater fully, for when her husband consulted her on the proposed change, she insisted that Mr. Slater should give them as good a home as their old one. The wages paid these operators ranged from one to \$1.25 and \$1.40 per week.
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S. SLATER & SONS SALES DEPARTMENT.
S. Slater & Sons, Incorporated, are the oldest commission house in the country. They began to sell their own goods in 1858, when only three styles of cotton cloth were carried. Jacquets, wrights and red cross combings, all finished for women wear. Jacquets and combies were stiff with a high lustre, and were used in large quantities in these styles. Half a dozen looms were making them.
The records of the sales department of 1858 are of exceptional interest. The sales of cotton for the year 1858 amounted to \$1,432,000, a value of \$2.25. This average price per piece was \$3.25. In later years the price was as low as \$2.50, owing to lower cost, and more extensive manufacturing methods.
At that time, and for a good many years afterward, three-fourths to seven-eighths of the company's cotton goods business was with the goods jobbing trade, and the balance with the retail trade. In the last eight or ten years a gradual change has taken place. Jobbers and retailers had large departments devoted to linings have abandoned them, women have ceased to use them. Many styles have gradually become obsolete, and it has been necessary to diversify the business. At the present time probably eighty per cent of the cotton business is with the "cutting up" trade, of course during the years 1867-1869 the number of styles made are increased and the growth of sales has been a steady one.
In 1850 Horatio N. Slater, Jr., commenced the printing of sleeve linings, with a production of 1,000 pairs. In 1851 the total had grown to 1,000 pieces, and the following year to double that amount, and thereafter the development in the printing department was rapid.
From the time the company began to sell their own goods the cotton production has increased more than 100,000 pieces to one million pieces.
The growth of the woollen sales has been equally great. In 1866 the 15,436 pieces were sold for \$1,207,537. The product consisted of coats, castors, overcoats, and trousers of heavy all-wool, woolen goods for men. Of black cloth and doerings the company has a good quality of the same styles under the same names to-day. Orders of forty-five years ago can be duplicated. Some goods have gone out altogether. No more castors are sold and very few heavy, kerseys having taken the place of beavers.
As for black cloth, 2,454 pieces of cloth were sold, all black, blue, or brown. In later years worsteds have come on the market, and owing to their superior intrinsic worth as well as wearing qualities have gradually displaced cloth. In the years went by styles manufactured of the woollen material were multiplied and there was some growth, though the sales ran around 20,000 pieces for a number of years. In 1890, of the 46,000 pieces of woollen goods, 23,000 were of flannels and chevets divided about equally. Now both are out of fashion, having been supplanted by worsted serge and fancy goods. A liberal estimate of the present demand for these two styles combined is from 1,500 to 2,000 pieces a year.
Recently a dress goods department has been added and there is now sold in woollen and worsteds all styles for men and women's wear.
The growth of this business can perhaps best be understood by the following comparison:
1812, 5,000 pounds of cotton yarn in hand, valued at a moderate situation.
1850, 21,432 pieces of cotton in hand, valued at a moderate situation.
1912, 1,250,000 pieces of cotton in hand, valued at a moderate situation.
S. SLATER & SONS Incorporated, New York, Everett Building, 215 Fourth Avenue, Boston, Mass., 77 Bedford Street, St. Louis, Mo., 206 Columbia Bldg., Philadelphia, Pa., 600 Chestnut St., Baltimore, Md., 109 Hopkins Place, Webster, Mass.



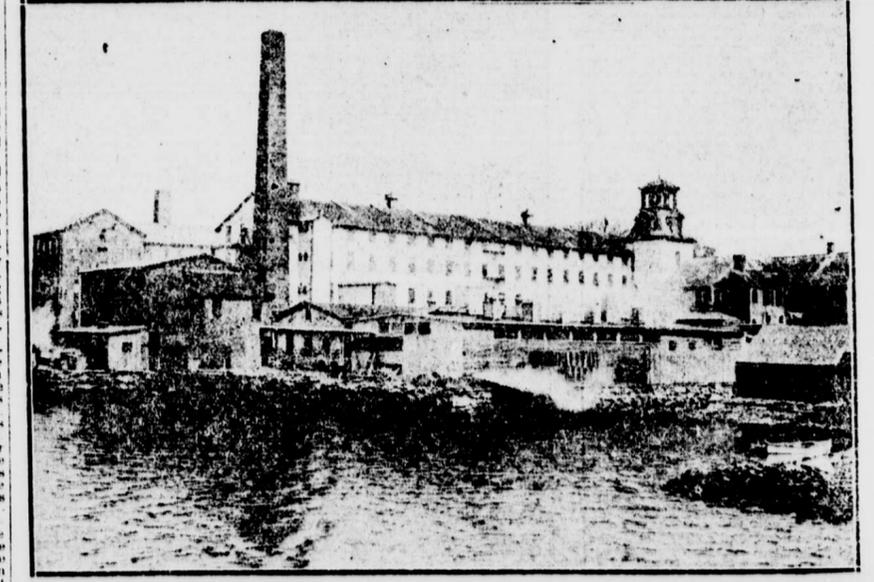
Perseverance Worsted Mills
Manufacturers of
Fine Fancy Worsteds
Woonsocket, R. I.

SOUTH AMERICAN WOOL

Some From Sheep and Some From Goats and Some Very Fine.
In Great Britain, Germany and the Eastern States of America the raising of sheep is profitable on account of the mutton. In South America, as in several other countries, the chief value of the animal is its fleece. Fortunes have been made where not a pound of mutton has been sold.
Wool is not a product of the sheep alone. It may be wool although it comes from the backs of several varieties of goats, from the camel, the alpaca, the guanaco, the vicuna or the llama as well as the sheep. From the sheep there are many varieties of wool—long, short, straight and curly, coarse and fine. Without any other tool than a round stone cloth may be made from wool by simply spreading it out and hammering it while it is moist.
The sheep that has, many say, modified the sheep of other countries is the Spanish merino of South America, of which the wool is long, soft and twisted into silky ringlets. South America possesses in addition to the domestic sheep introduced into the Western Hemisphere by the early English, Spanish and Portuguese settlers a group of wild bearing animals known as the vicuna. This group is the "auचना" and comprises four species, the alpaca, the guanaco, the llama and the vicuna.
The vicuna and the llama were domesticated by the native Indians long before the advent of the Spaniards in South America. The guanaco, found from the equator south to Tierra del Fuego, is about the size of the English red deer. The llama is somewhat smaller and is a habitant of Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia. Both of these animals are esteemed mainly for food and as beasts of burden, yielding fine quality of wool or hair, ordinarily sold as alpaca.
The vicuna is about the size of a fallow deer and lives in the mountains of Peru and Bolivia. It is hunted for its wool, which is of an exceptionally delicate wool worth nearly twice as much as alpaca. The vicuna like the domestic sheep is kept in flocks. These and the domestic sheep are the animals from which Spanish America derives its wool in wool.
The sheep industry is spread over the entire southern part of the continent. The pioneers of the industry are found in the region of the Straits of Magellan.

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