

Hart's History and Directory

: : : of the : : :

THREE TOWNS



**B R O W N S V I L L E
B R I D G E P O R T
W E S T B R O W N S V I L L E**

Illustrated with Portraits & Views

**Also Abridged History of
Fayette County & Western
Pennsylvania : : : :**

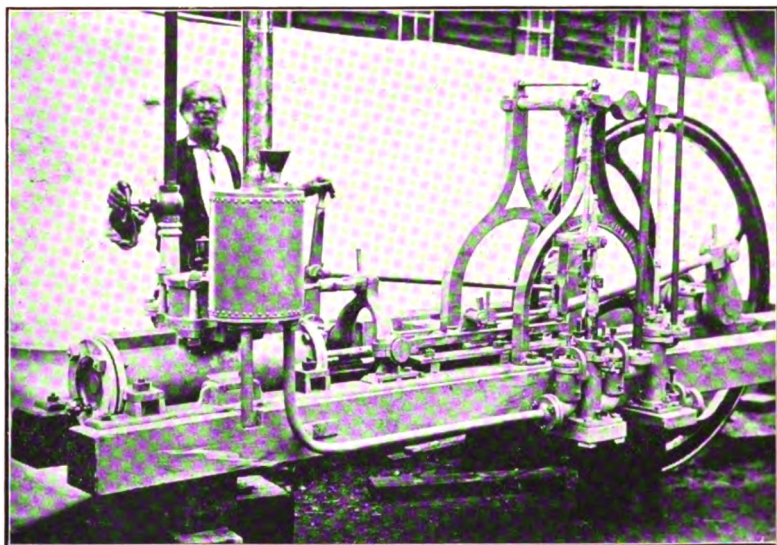
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Thos. Faull's Steam Engine

of it and ran it for four years. J. M. Hutchinson and T. C. S. Williams then bought the yard and conducted it for about five years when they sold out to H. B. Cock & Co. They continued the business till 1875 when the yard was discontinued.

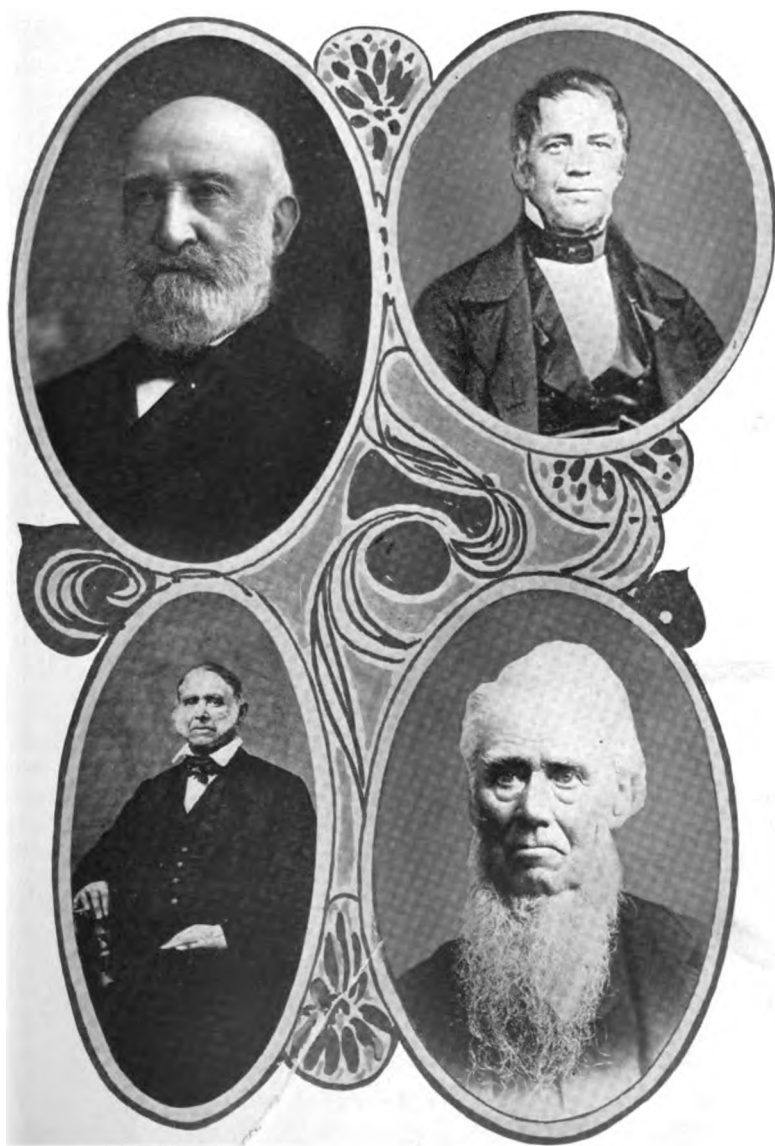
THE HERBERTSON & COMPANY FOUNDRY AND MACHINE SHOPS.

The foundry and machine shops of Herbertson & Co., was established in 1838 by John Herbertson and Thomas Faull, Mr. Herbertson having been the superintendent of Snowden's foundry when the castings were made for the Dunlap's Creek bridge. In 1842 the partnership between Herbertson and Faull was dissolved, Mr. Herberston continuing the business. The establishment was at first a small one compared with what it is now. Almost every year since then new departments, new machinery and more space has been added, till now the business is one of gigantic proportions. It is still conducted by William H. and George S. Herbertson, under the firm name of J. Herbertson's Sons.

THE VULCAN IRON AND MACHINE WORKS.

One of the most important, if not the most important manufacturing establishments in Brownsville in the early days, was the foundry, forge,

VETERAN ENGINE BUILDERS AND MACHINISTS.



J. Nelson Snowdon.
Thos. Faull.

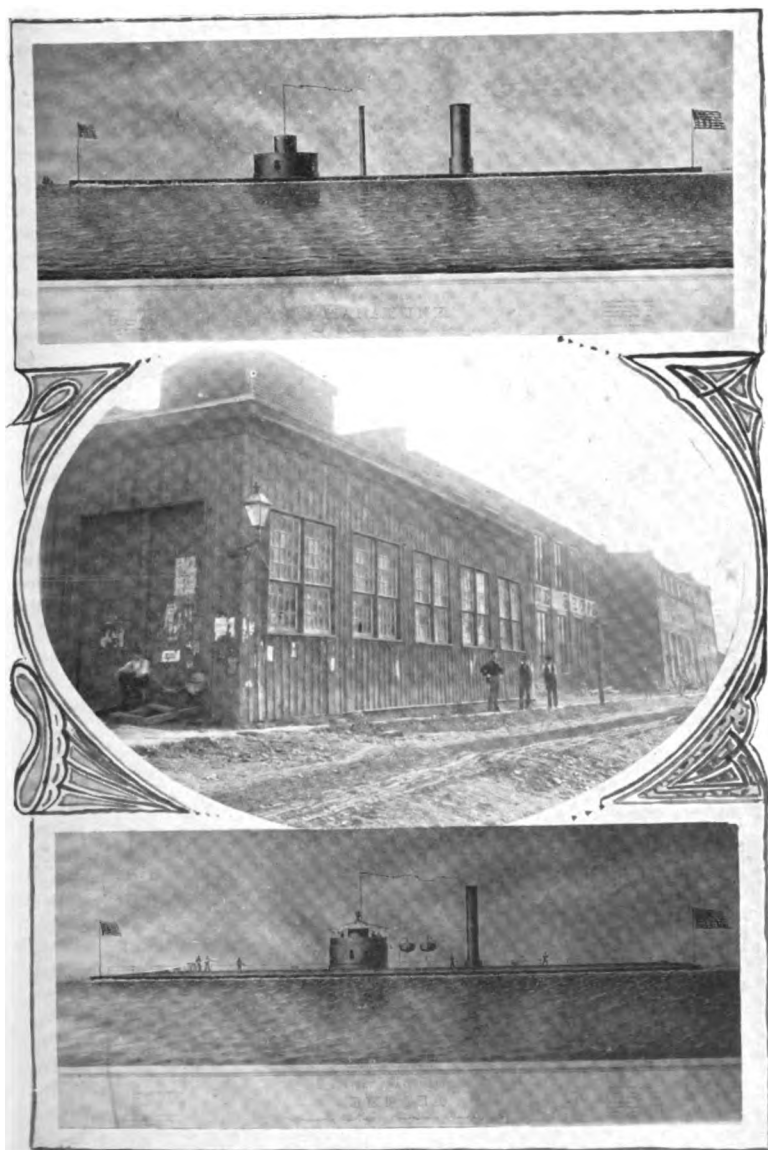
John Snowdon.
John Herbertson.

rolling mill and machine shop of Capt. John Snowdon known as the Vulcan Iron and Machine Works. It was located on Water street where the Connells-ville Central R. R. is now cutting through the hill across Market and Front streets for its tracks. In consideration of the many descendents of Capt. John Snowdon, who are still prominent citizens of Brownsville, an extended notice of this industry that did so much for Brownsville, may not be considered out of order.

John Snowdon came to Brownsville from Yorkshire, England, in 1818, bringing with him his wife and two children. He was a blacksmith by trade and a man of superior ability. He commenced work at his trade for John Weaver at one dollar a day which was more than was being paid to any blacksmith in Brownsville at that time. One of the first things he did outside of his regular work in the shop, was to make a stove or what was called an English oven for George Hogg. This work not only proved so satisfactory that he received orders for several more stoves but served to show Mr. Hogg who was a man of means, that Mr. Snowdon was more than an ordinary workman and prompted him to furnish him with the means for starting a shop of his own which in time grew to the magnificent proportions hereinafter described.

The principal building was of brick, two stories high and 150x50 feet. This was used as a finishing shop. It was admirably constructed with a view to the convenience of the workmen and facilitating the work. Its two floors were the full size of the building and well lighted. These rooms were filled with the best machinery then known for the work, among which may be named 19 turning lathes, six planing mills, four boring machines, and eight drill presses. On the lower floor were ten blacksmith forges with all their necessary equipments, such as cranes steam forge hammers etc. The foundry adjoined the machine shop and was connected with it. It was 50x50 feet and equipped with two cupolas with a capacity of twelve tons each and was fitted out with all the other appliances of a first-class foundry. Adjoining the latter was the pattern shop 60x40 feet, two stories high. These three buildings were of brick and virtually formed one building two stories high, 230 feet long and with the exception of the pattern shop, 50 feet wide. In the rear of these buildings was the rolling mill and forge in a building 180x50 feet, one story high. The rolling mill was equipped with six pairs of rolls, two puddling furnaces, two heating furnaces, one spike and one rivet machine, and turned out about 600 tons of bar iron yearly. The forge was supplied with the usual appliances for bloom making. The boiler yard was also well equipped for the rapid execution of work. The machinery of this whole establishment was propelled by four steam engines, one with a five-inch bore, one 12 inches, one 14 inches and the other 20 inches (stroke not given).

The entire cost of the plant was about \$125,000 and the annual product was valued at about \$150,000. A hardware or iron store was also run in connection with the works at which the products were sold. For many years there were employed regularly about two hundred men in these shops. Here were made annually the engines and all other machinery for about fifteen steamboats and as many other engines.



Snowdon Machine Shops and Two Gunboats
built by Snowdon's during the War.
for the Government.

At these shops Mr. Snowdon built the engines and all the other ironwork for steamers for Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Texas, Michigan, California and many other states. He also built boats to run on the Rio Grande, for the government, during the Mexican war as well as two gunboats for the government during the Rebellion, though we understand the latter two were built at his shops in Pittsburg where he had a plant of about the same capacity as the Brownsville plant. He built the first steamboat that ever ran on the Sacramento river and as has been stated before, built the iron bridge across Dunlap's Creek which was the first iron bridge built in America and which is still standing seemingly as solid as adamant. The old metal mile-posts that may yet be seen at a few places along what was once the National Pike, were made by Mr. Snowdon in this shop.

Capt. John Snowdon was ever mindful of the welfare of those whom he employed, was liberal in giving to all worthy individuals or causes, and there was not in him a drop of penurious blood. Starting as he did in 1818 without a dollar, by persistent application, guided by phenomenal wisdom and guarded by prudence, in 1867 he had accumulated an independent fortune and this, too, in spite of the fact that in 1841 he lost more than \$40,000 by the bankrupt law; that in 1853 his entire plant including machinery, patterns and stock was totally destroyed by fire entailing a loss of over \$80,000 with but \$5,000 insurance, and that he lost over \$25,000 during the Rebellion by the failure of contractors in consequence of the war.

Captain Snowdon was an F. and A. M. for many years before his death. In 1816 he married Miss Mary Smith and to them were born the following Children: Ann who afterwards became the wife of Adam Jacobs, of Brownsville; Elizabeth, wife of Walter Smith of Cincinnati, Ohio; Samuel S. of St. Louis, Mo.; I. W. S. of Brownsville; and Sarah M. wife of I. H. Roberts, Allegheny, Pa. Towards the latter part of his business career, his two sons engaged in business with him. He died at Brownsville, January 25, 1875, but the history of his life, his labors and his triumphs, will be read and held up as an incentive to industry and perseverance for many generations yet unborn.

THE FRENCH COTTON AND WOOLEN MILLS.

It was also about the year 1811 that Daniel French of whom mention is made elsewhere in this volume, came here and organized a company for manufacturing various articles among them cotton yarn, woolen yarn and the like. We have been unable to learn the exact date when the building was commenced or finished but the following advertisement of the manager, that appeared in a newspaper (Pittsburg paper) under date of August 15, 1814, shows that it was about completed at that time. The advertisement announces to the public that "the factory is nearly ready to go into operation, which will be drove by steam, where we intend keeping a constant supply of cotton yarn of various descriptions, which we will sell at the most reduced prices. And, in addition to the above we have two new wool carding machines with first-rate cards, and having engaged an experienced carder, we hope,