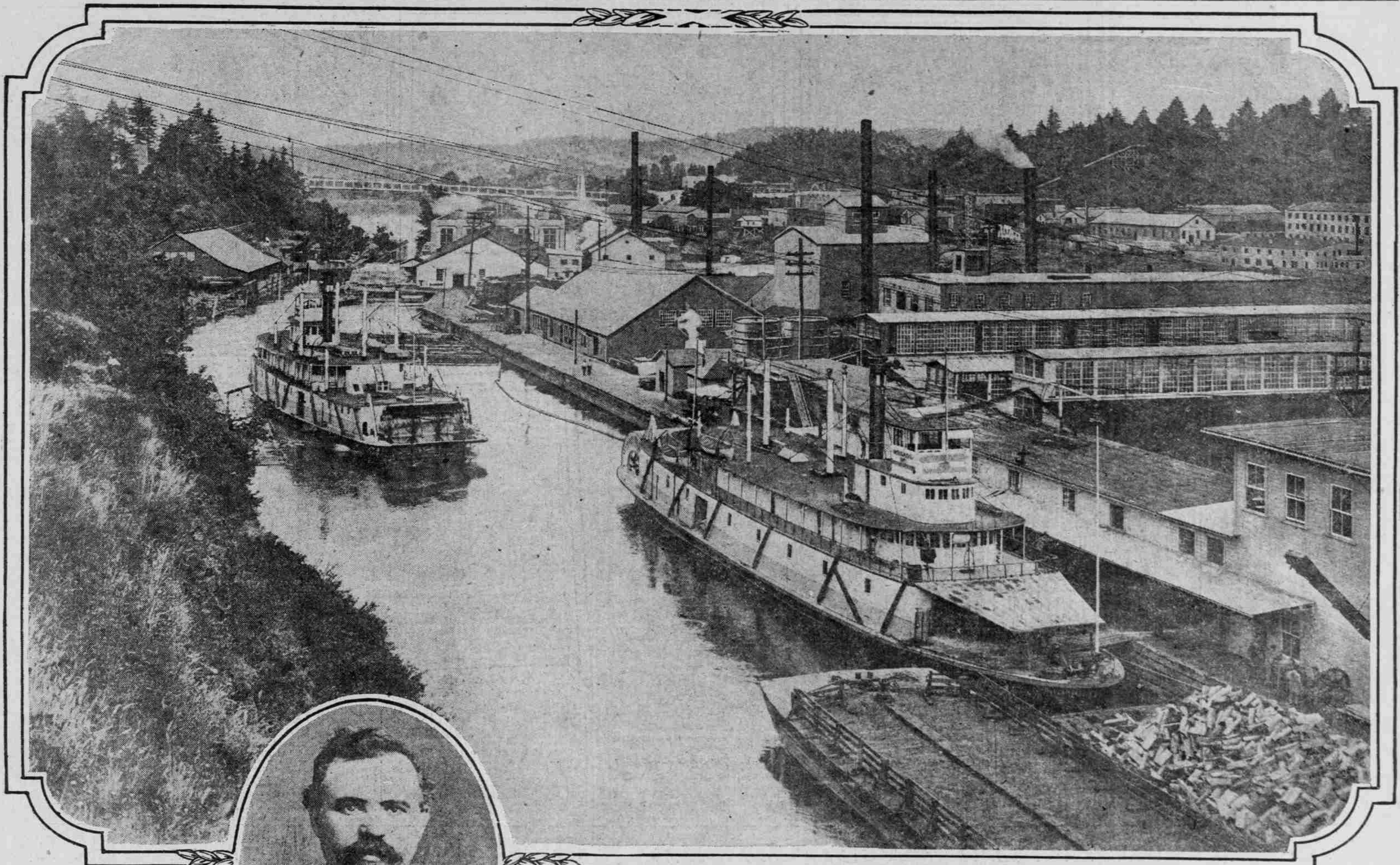


# OREGON CITY'S FIRST PAPER MILL STARTED 50 YEARS AGO

Pulp at First Made From Rags, Which Were Costly and Hard to Get and Early Plant Fails.



OREGON CITY, Or., Nov. 4.—(Special.)—Were it not for the fact that the big paper mills at the Falls of the Willamette were exerting every effort to keep pace with orders they might be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the industry in Oregon City.

In October, 1866, a small four-story stone building was completed in Oregon City, the pioneer paper mill of the North Pacific Coast. Its daily output of 1500 pounds of paper contrasts strangely with the 280 tons turned out each 24 hours by the two companies operating here now. Then the paper mills employed 20 hands, now about 1300 men work in the mills. Paper then was made from rags, for the wood pulp processes of today were just being worked out in the East, while in one of Oregon City's modern mills of 1916 logs enter the mill at one end and paper is turned out ready for the presses at the other.

**Early Process Described.**

"The building for the pioneer paper mill of Oregon is now completed and the machinery well advanced preparatory to active operations," reads a paper on the subject printed half a century ago. "It will in every particular be a first-class establishment. The capital stock of the company is \$50,000. The present machinery includes one full set of modern cylinder description with a capacity to turn out about 1500 pounds of paper per day. Of operatives they will employ about 20 men and women. The building is of brick and stone, four stories high, 59 by 66 feet in size, with an addition 17 by 60 feet, two stories high. This space is divided into rooms adapted for the work of making paper.

"When the stock is first received it is weighed and then hoisted to the fourth story of the main building, used as a stockroom. As it is wanted it is passed through an opening to the third story or sorting-room, where the process of sorting the material for each particular kind of paper is gone through with and the rags so sorted are placed in proper bins. It next passes to the second story, where it is subjected to a process of cutting and dusting, thence it passes into the first story, where it is cooked and is then put into beaters, where it is bleached and ground into pulp.

"The pulp now passes into 'stuff chests,' from whence it is pumped up to the paper machines, where the nicest process is performed. After leaving the 'stuff chests' the pulp passes into a vat, where it forms into a sheet, on a wire cylinder, the water being all extracted by a fan wheel, and turned back to another section of the vat, to pass through the same process over and again, leaving the pulp to adhere to the filing machine as it moves along, on through the first press rolls.

"At this point the sheet is practically sufficient in itself to bear its own weight and it passes on through the second press rolls, next to the drying cylinder, thence through the calendars, next on the reels and finally to the cutters, where the paper is laid off in sheets, and then by the help of the finishing room, where it is counted, folded, pressed, bundled and sacked, finds its way to market.

**Mill Declared Credit.**

"Taken through, the work of making paper is one of rare interest. The mill in this city is really a credit to the superintendent, W. W. Buck, and the chief architect and millwright, A. M. Buck, his son, H. S. Buck, and H. L.



William Lewthwaite.

Hardin, and an honor to the enterprise of its projectors. There is a great demand for materials, by which it may be kept in active operation when once under way.

"The market for paper on this Coast for the past two years has been poorly supplied, most kinds have been high. The two mills of California, at Taylorville and Santa Cruz, have been but a mere drop in the bucket, as it were, as, while they have been constantly employed, prices of paper still gradually advance, with a very scant supply. In 1865 the pioneer mill of Taylorville manufactured 5320 reams of news and 3840 reams of wrapping. They are doing even better than that during the present year, and yet they are not able to fill their orders. We have no report from the Santa Cruz mill, but no doubt they are doing equally as well."

The backers of that pioneer plant foresaw a prosperous future, but that future was never realized as far as they were concerned. Half a century ago rags were used almost entirely for paper making, although the manufacture of a paper made principally from wood pulp was then an accomplished fact. Two plants, both near Philadelphia, were turning out paper made from wood and straw, mixed in proportions ranging from 60 to 80 per cent wood.

**Wood Pulp Method Employed.**

It was not until many years later that wood pulp paper became a reality in Oregon. Some sulphide pulp was imported from Germany in later years by the H. L. Pittock plant on the Clackamas River, and the first wood pulp actually made in the state of Oregon was turned out on a common feed mill. Wood was fed into the mill in small pieces and cut into chips, which were actually used in paper making, however, with little success.

Mr. Buck, who can be considered the pioneer paper mill promoter of the North Pacific Coast, did not see his dreams realized to their full extent. His mill at Oregon City, while it turned out straw and Magilla papers, much of which was shipped to San Francisco in competition with California mills, it did not prosper. The machinery gave no end of trouble, rags were high and even difficult to buy at a liberal figure. At one time Mr. Buck is said to have offered \$2500 to any person who could adjust his paper machine so that it would run satisfactorily.

Other difficulties crept into the business, until in the summer of 1867, less than a year after the mill started, it was shut down. The Bank of British Columbia held claims against the plant totaling \$19,040, and Sheriff W. P. Burns sold the property, building, equipment and stock August 19, 1867.



Captain W.H. Smith.

Pittock, publisher of The Oregonian, formed a new paper company, called H. L. Pittock & Co. They decided to rebuild Mr. Buck's sawmill on the Clackamas River, situated about a quarter of a mile above the present county bridge across the river. The mill was put to work preparing lumber which would be necessary for the new buildings of the paper plant and modern machinery was ordered from Worcester, Mass. An early account of the plans of the company recites the fact that the company planned to make every grade of paper from strawboard to cream laid note paper.

In the meantime there was a paper shortage in Oregon. The Oregon City Enterprise carried the following paragraph at the head of its local column in the issue of August 22, 1867:

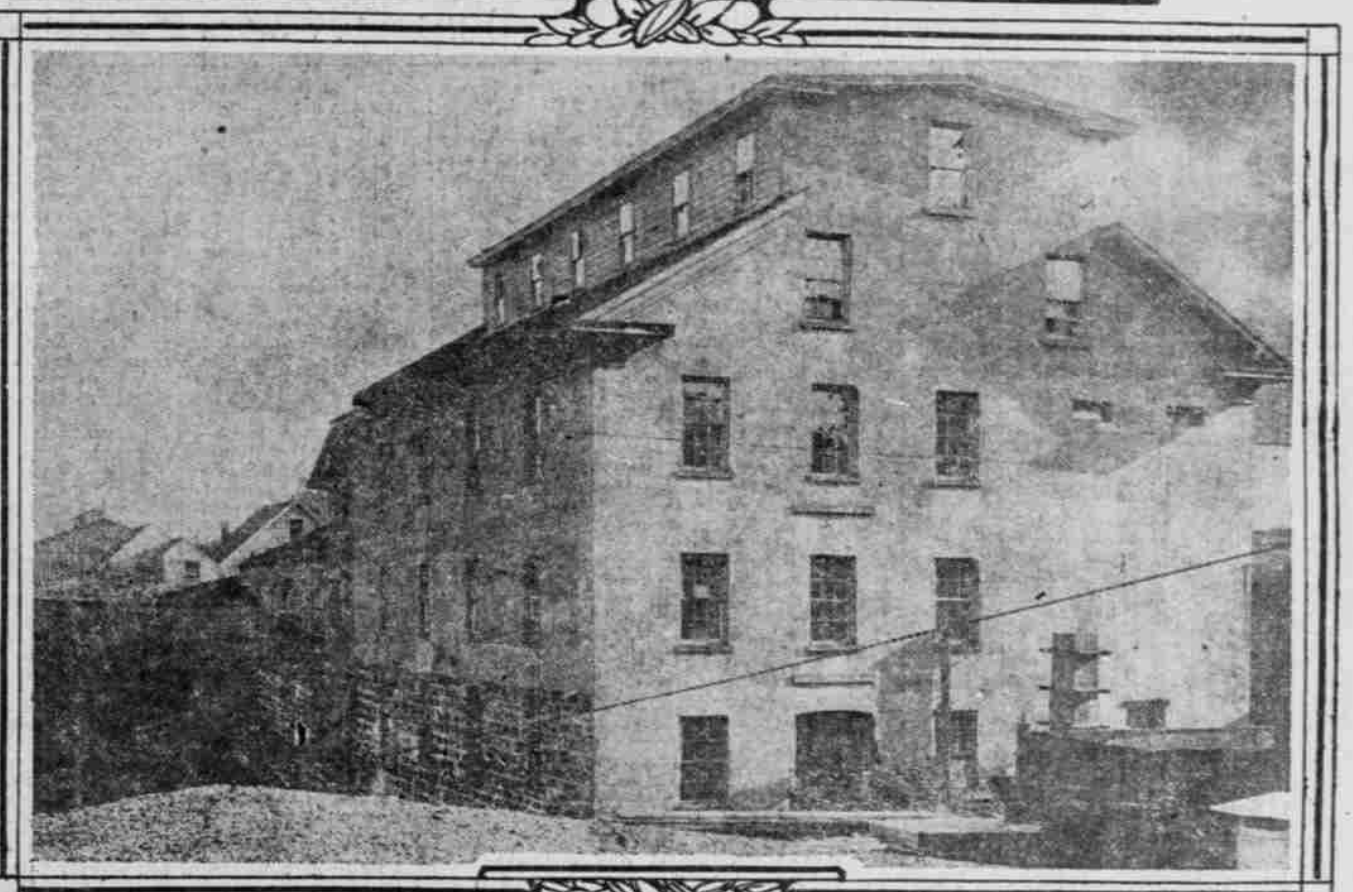
"Many of our readers this week get more margin with their paper than is either useful or ornamental. Others will get but half a sheet. This is provoking and worries our good temper—but is wholly unavoidable. We had a supply of paper on hand that would have kept us through until the Clackamas mill started, but it is leased to The Oregonian, and Mr. Pittock has been disappointed in not procuring of others, we presume. It is to be hoped that the mill will be able to meet the demand next week."

The Enterprise in the issue of September 5, 1868, announces that the Clackamas mill was running and that that issue was printed on stock from the H. L. Pittock & Co. mill.

Mr. Pittock bought some of the stock of the first Oregon City mill at the Sheriff's sale, adding it to his plant on the Clackamas.

Early in the summer of 1866 there arrived in Oregon City, after a trying trip across the plains in an ox team, W. H. Smith, who served more than three years as a Captain in the Civil War. He and his brother spent the Summer cutting cordwood and early in the Fall they came to Oregon City in

Paper Mills and Locks at Oregon City.



First Paper Mill in Oregon City, Completed 50 Years Ago.

search of employment. The first paper mill was being constructed, and the two brothers went to work. Captain Smith put on the roof of the building and then went to work permanently for Mr. Buck at the sawmill on the Clackamas.

The backers of the new paper enterprise determined not to make the mistakes of the first company, and endeavored to secure an experienced paper maker. They were fortunate in being able to induce William Lewthwaite, then with the Taylor Paper Company at Taylorville, Cal., to come. Mr. Lewthwaite, born on the Isle of Man, came from a family of paper-makers and learned the trade as a boy. In addition to knowing every detail of papermaking, he was also a mechanic of no small ability. He arrived in Oregon about the time construction work began on the mill of H. L. Pittock & Co., superintended the reconstruction of the sawmill and the installation of the machinery and was in charge of the plant as superintendent until the construction of the first mill at Camas, then La Camas, began early in 1883. He was the father of A. J. Lewthwaite, manager of the Crown Willamette Paper Company, and brother of John Lewthwaite, superintendent.

During the time Mr. Lewthwaite was superintendent, Captain Smith was machine tender, and when Mr. Lewthwaite went to Camas to take charge of the mill building there Captain Smith acted as superintendent in his stead. The machinery was taken from the Clackamas River mill to Camas and the buildings on the Clackamas again were rebuilt, this time into a furniture factory. Since then the structures have been destroyed by fire.

**Capacity Two Tons a Day.**

The Bucks and Mr. Pittock continued in business for some time when Mr. Pittock took over the entire plant. The mill had one machine, making, according to Captain Smith, a trifle less than two tons of paper a day. A wagon

hauled the finished product to Oregon City from day to day, and carried the rags and straw back to the mill.

Nets discarded by the fishermen on the Columbia, sails from the ships that came into Portland; straw from the farms in the vicinity, chemicals shipped from San Francisco and rags gathered from a score of towns were shipped to the Pittock plant to be converted into paper of a dozen kinds.

The Camas mill was built by the Columbia River Paper Company, organized by Mr. Pittock and his associates. It produced its first paper in May, 1885. Mr. Lewthwaite was superintendent and for about six months Captain Smith was a machine tender in the plant. The building burned in September, 1887, but soon thereafter the construction of a new mill on the site of the old was begun.

Then followed consolidations and expansions until we have the Crown Willamette Paper Company of today with mills here capable of turning out over 200 tons of paper a day, another big plant at Camas, Wash., a mill at Floriston, Cal., and another at Lebanon, and other interests.

After the Oregon City Paper Manufacturing Company, as the backers of the first paper mill called themselves 50 years ago, had gone out of existence, the old was rebuilt and for years was used as a flour mill, Joseph W. Ganong, now manager of the Portland Flouring Mill Company, and his brother, Clark, went to work in that plant. For a score of years it was known as the old brick mill. Recently it was acquired

by the Hawley Pulp & Paper Company and part of its walls form part of one of the buildings of the Hawley mill of today.

Although that plant, completed 50 years ago this month, could not produce in an entire year one day's output of the great mills that line the banks of the Willamette now; although its machinery was primitive and its methods insufficient, it was the pioneer mill of the Northwest, and the third completed on the Pacific Coast, being operated on the Pacific Coast, and which are capable of turning out newspapers at the rate of 700 feet per minute in widths of 174 inches.

Resort to a pencil and paper to get the full significance of those figures. Geared up to its highest speed, this machine will turn out eight miles of paper almost 14 feet wide in an hour. In two days' time it can produce enough to lay a strip of paper a foot wide across the continent with several hundred miles to spare.

The Crown Willamette Company in its mills here alone employs almost 300 men in the winter months, or about 45 times as many as worked in that mill 50 years ago.

This is the growth of the paper industry in Oregon in half a century, and the end to this expansion is not here. One million dollars is going into new mills at the present time and Oregon City soon can claim without dispute the honor of being one of the half-

dozen principal paper-making cities of these United States.

**Scholarships May Bar Germans.**

LONDON, Nov. 2.—The House of Commons passed this evening the second reading of the Rhodes Estate bill, which would exclude Germans henceforth from enjoying scholarships at Oxford University under the Cecil Rhodes trust fund.

**Peeling the Skin is Better Than Bleaching**

Ever since the discovery that mercurochrome would absorb and remove a discolored complexion, its use by ladies as a substitute for bleaching creams has grown rapidly. A perfect complexion can be maintained indefinitely if this remarkable substance is used. Its beneficial cleansing, clearing and preservative action is quickly apparent, and ladies who have been paying high prices for "special bleach" from beauty specialists, soon recognize that mercurochrome has outwitted them all. It has become so popular that it can be obtained at all drug stores, who have it in original one-ounce packages. The favorite way of using is to apply it like cold cream, before retiring, washing it off in the morning.

The exorbitant price for wrinkles and the facial contour has also become extremely popular. One ounce of powdered mercurochrome dissolved in one-half pint which "black" the face in this has a splendid effect in causing wrinkles and improving contour.—Adv.