

The Paper Mill
of
Cazenovia, Madison County, New York



"By the Old Mill Stream", George Louis Hollrock, New York.

The Cazenovia Paper Mill was in the village, on the south-west corner of Sweetland Street and Clark Street, on the north side of Chittenango Creek.

Lands in what is now Madison County were first acquired by the State of New York in 1788 by a treaty with the Oneida Indians of the Iroquois Confederacy. The State sold many of the lands and by 1799 the Holland Land Company had acquired considerable lands in Cazenovia Township. Previously, in 1794, one particular parcel had been surveyed and divided into tracts, and those into allotments, by Joseph Annin for Peter Smith. The future paper mill would be on the 4th allotment of the New Petersburg Tract. Lot NP4 had also previously been divided into lettered lots and a larger lot, PS, named after Peter Smith. Upon their acquisition in 1799, The Holland Land Company subdivided the 308 acres of Lot PS into various parcels. One of the largest of these parcels, containing just under 54 acres, was purchased in 1803 by Elisha Farnham. The purchase price was \$603.63, or about \$11 an acre. Farnham's purchase included most of the area between Sullivan Street and Chittenango Creek, and for many years, before it was fully developed in the 1830s, this part of the community was known as "Farnham's Woods." Farnham would go on to further subdivide his land into building lots. It is one of these lots that Zadock Sweetland purchased for a paper mill in 1814. In deeds it would be referred to as "Z. Sweetland land" on NP4 Lot PS. In the local newspaper it was simply the "paper mill".

Zadock Sweetland was born on the 6th of May 1782 in Hebron Township, Tolland County, CT; the fifth of five children born to Aaron and Patience (Clark) Sweetland. In April 1810 Zadock and his older brother Samuel dissolved their co-partnership in Glastonbury, CT, and Zadock moved to Cazenovia. Why he would move to Cazenovia at aged 28 is unknown although he had relatives in the area. His older brother, Eleazer Sweetland, owned land prior to 1810 in nearby Lebanon Township. And a 2nd cousin once removed,

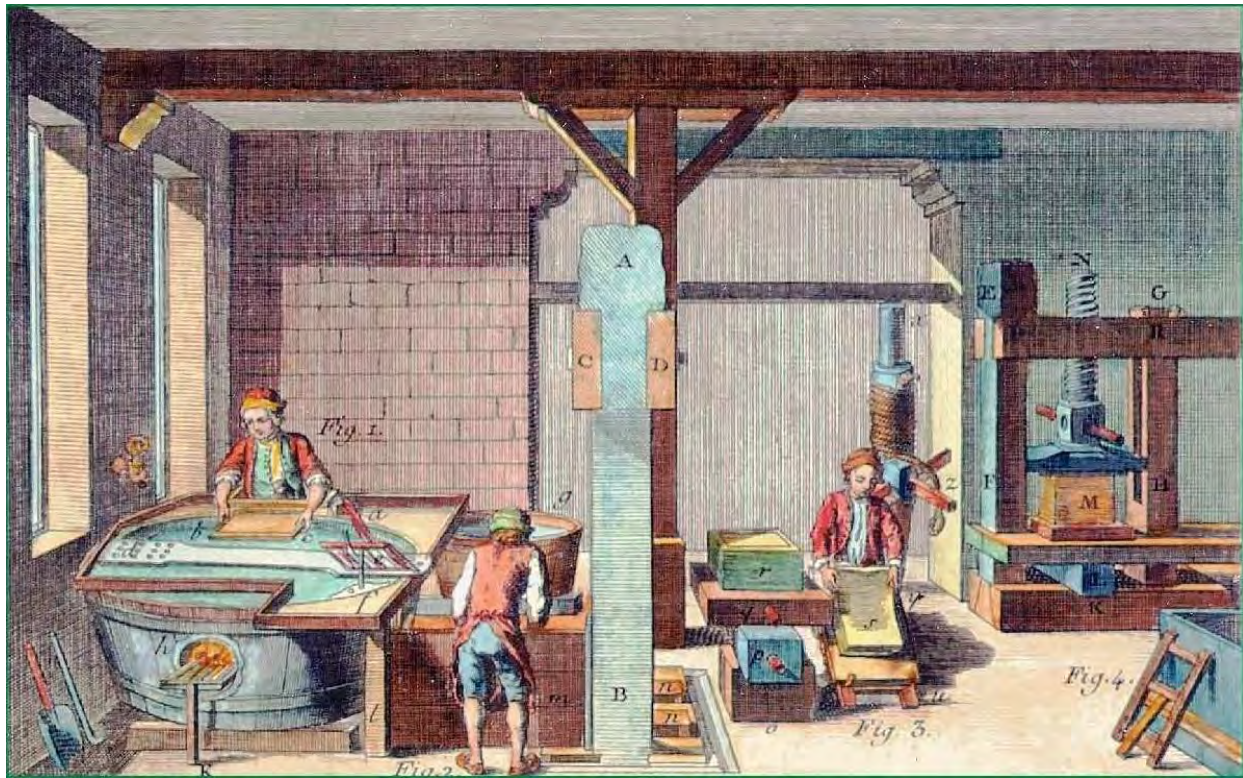
NOTICE.
THE Copartnership of S. & Z. SWEETLAND, is by mutual consent this day dissolved; and all persons indebted to said firm, are requested to make payment without delay, or expect cost.
**SAMUEL SWEETLAND,
ZADOCK SWEETLAND.**
Glastenbury, April 10th 1810. 60

Hartford Courant, 18 April 1810, p3.

Caleb Sweetland, had purchased a farm lot in 1801 in Cazenovia Township. Zadock purchased a property within the village in March of 1811 from Jabez Nicholas Masters "Jabish" Hurd and was listed on the first ever Cazenovia village tax list of 1811 with his real and personal property valued at about \$200, paying 50¢ in tax. A pittance when compared to others and suggesting he had purchased a small farm. For 1812 he had real and personal property of \$1,000, so something was happening. By May of 1813 Zadock was in a business partnership with Othniel Clark, as Sweetland & Clark, although Zadock's taxes were still based on \$1,000.

In the spring of 1814, Zadock obtained ownership of the site of his future paper mill from Elisha Farnham, with a deed dated 22 April 1814. It is unknown whether the purchase was out-right or by way of a mortgage. Zaddock's business arrangements had changed, becoming Sweetland, Clark & Co., and his worth definitely improved, with the new company's taxes based on \$2,500.

By the spring of 1814 Zadock's brother Samuel had moved to Cazenovia and appeared for the first time on the tax list of 1814 with real and personal property valued at \$1,500. At this time the firm Sweetland & Clark became Sweetland, Clark & Co. as Samuel had joined the firm. It is possible that Samuel arrived with money to aid Zadock in his land purchase. By November of 1814, Zadock definitely owned a farm in or near Cazenovia village for at that time he advertised looking for a stray cow that broke out of pasture. Interestingly, he ran the identical advertisement in late January. He must have been an optimist. Finding a cow



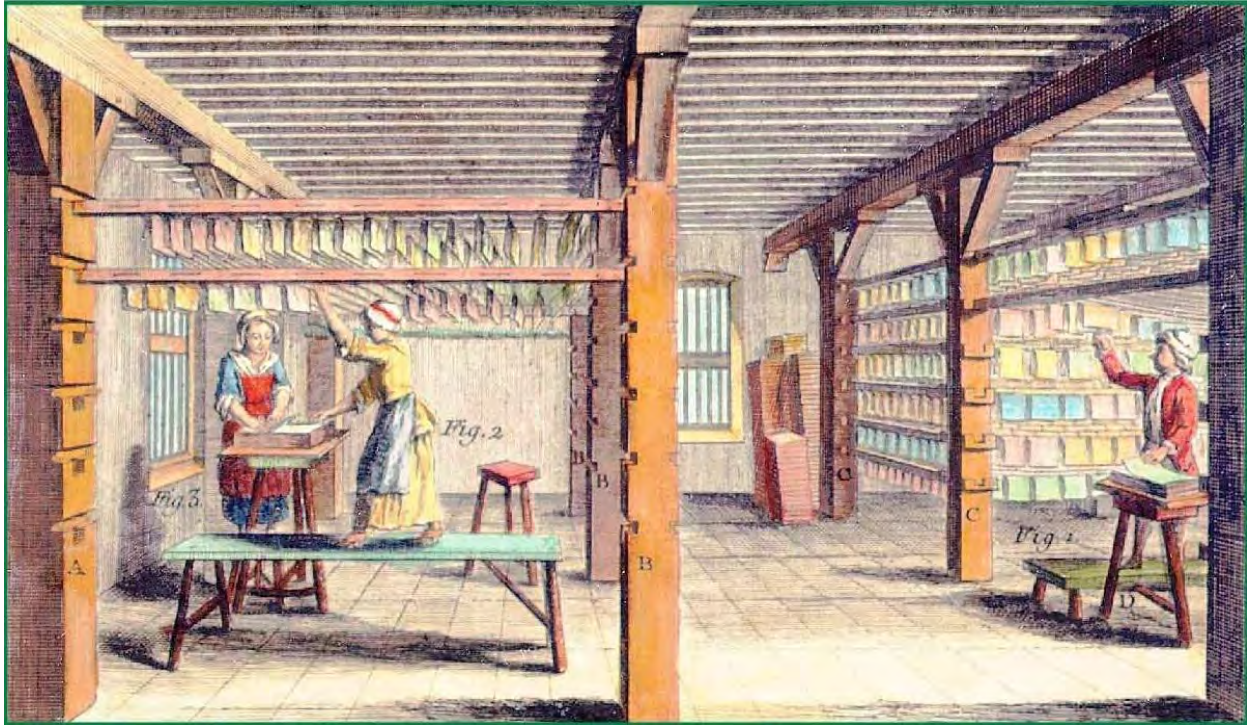
Paper Making. *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences*, Denis Diderot, Plate X, c.1760.

missing for two months during a north country winter would be highly unlikely.

There is no doubt that the Mr. Clark was Othniel Clark. A number of land deeds remain that were recorded between 1814 and 1817 involving Samuel, Zadock and Othniel acting together. Several of these deeds involve lands near the paper mill site. In the fall of 1851 Cazenovia village renamed a number of the streets as well as giving names to some unnamed. The *Cazenovia Gazette* reported "The street leading from the paper mill east to Burton St. was to be named Clark St. after the late Othniel Clark, owner of most of the adjoining land." Coincidentally, the 1852 Gurdon Evans map of the village shows Clark St. with "Z. Sweetland" as the owner of most of the adjoining land. It would be natural for Clark and the Sweetlands to be in business together as Zadock and Samuel, as well as Caleb, were natives of Hebron Township, CT, while Clark was a native of Middletown Township, CT, the two townships being only

twenty miles apart. It is interesting to note that the farmland that Caleb purchased in 1801 was RTR Lot 53 of the Holland Land Company's Road Township Reservation tract, now the location of the historic Sweetland Farmhouse on Number Nine Road.

It is often stated that Zadock Sweetland constructed his paper mill about 1810. This year was first put forth in 1859 in an article in the local newspaper and repeated in 1880 by James Smith in his book *History of Chenango and Madison Counties*. Based on an examination of published records of the day, not readily available to the newspaper and Mr. Smith, a more likely date for the paper mill's operation would be 1813 or, perhaps, 1814. Zadock would have had to buy, or at least lease, land, raise capital, appeal for raw materials, and line up willing customers. To use the water power for his mill, Zadock would first have needed to build a dam, create a mill pond, and dig a tailrace. To make paper he would need a water wheel, several different buildings,



Drying Paper. *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences*, Denis Diderot, Plate XII, c.1760.

numerous pieces of machinery, at least one vat, imported moulds, piping, pumps, water chests, tubs, a fireplace, fire pots, kettles, etc. All would take time. For Zadock, arriving in the spring of 1810, it would be unrealistic to have an operating mill by year's end. Perhaps the paper mill was operating by 1813 on leased land. William Freeman Galpin, in his epic work *Central New York, an Island Empire*, stated in 1941 that Zadock Sweetland's paper mill was founded during the war of 1812.

Zadock's paper mill site was a small property of about three acres, being on both sides of Chittenango Creek. The importance of the site was the flowing water and the power available from it with a drop of fourteen feet. A surveyor's description of the property has survived and its unusual shape can be identified today.

Why Zadock would enter the paper making business is a mystery. Making paper was a difficult process involving many steps with some requiring considerable skill that only could be acquired through years of practice. Obviously, some in Zadock's circle had this

knowledge and skill and there were definitely markets for paper. The main uses of paper in 1810 were writing paper, wrapping paper, book printing and newspaper publishing. More than a hundred paper mills were established in America between 1807 and 1815 and an 1810 survey of American industry identified 179 paper mills of which 28 were in New York State. There were none in Madison County and only 6 in the five surrounding counties. Prior to 1817, all paper in America was made by hand, one sheet at a time, using old linen and cotton. At the time, all printing was done by hand presses and therefore paper of an endless length was uncalled for. Discarded cloth was required as the use of wood pulp for paper making was unknown. The rags were ground to make a pulp and the grinding was powered by a water wheel. Zadock's site at least had two of the requirements of the papermaking craft of the day; water and mechanical power. Fiber, knowledge and skill could be imported.

The war of 1812 may have encouraged the Sweetlands to enter the paper industry as the British embargo forced individuals and



Cazenovia village and its paper mill, Madison County, NY. Henry Hart, 1852.

companies to purchase paper products locally. However, it was a two-edged sword as paper was made from rags, the majority of it imported from Europe. The blockade and low population density in some areas meant that mills struggled to gather enough raw materials to keep up with demand. This created a critical and enduring shortage of rags during the war years and after.

The business grew and in March 1820 Clark was out and the new firm's name was Z. & S. Sweetland. Taxes for 1821 were based on a value of \$2,000, each, for the firm and Samuel and \$1,500 for Zadock.

Little is known of who the Sweetlands' first customers were. Cazenovia became the county seat of Madison in 1810 and a court

house followed in 1811, with both the seat and the courts requiring paper. It seems likely that an early customer was the local newspaper, *The Pilot*. When the newspaper started in August 1808 the nearest paper mill was that of Thomas Sayles & Co. in the village of New Hartford, thirty-five miles away. *The Pilot* was published once a week as a small folio sheet on what has been described as heavy rough paper; a folio being one piece of paper folded over, producing four sides. The Sweetlands may have acquired new customers starting in July 1816 when an act of congress imposed a 30% duty on "paper of every description" imported to the United States. Paper from the mill may have also been used by local book publishers. In an 1818 issue of *The Pilot*, it is learned that

Zaddock Sweetland would go on to accumulate several hundred acres of farmland near his paper mill and had a large estate and farm of about 40 acres on the west side of Lincklaen St., just north of present day Lincklaen Terrace. Gurdon Evans' 1852 map of the village shows the extent of Zadock's holdings and an 1853 village map by Henry Hart identifies his farmstead as "Dea. Sweetland", Zadock being a deacon in the Presbyterian Church. Illness came early for Zadock and by 1845 his two sons, James Wright and Walter Hale, were operating the paper mill. In May of that year the sons formed a co-partnership with Sylvanus H. Henry, a local publisher, as Henry & Sweetlands for the purpose of book publishing, book selling and paper making. They purchased the publishing business of Henry, Hitchcock & Co. located on the north side of Albany St., west of Lincklaen St. and immediately east of the Ten Eyck Block. Although destroyed by fire in 1872, their location would correspond to 61 Albany St. of the present day. Their work also included bookbinding and in 1846 they submitted a bill to the village for such work. They occasionally advertised for clean linen or cotton delivered at their store or paper mill. They also sold a wide variety of plain and fancy stationary. The partnership ran from May 1845 to June 1848 when it was announced that Sylvanus was out and so was publishing for the Sweetland brothers. James Wright Sweetland and Walter Hale Sweetland would now conduct the business of paper-making as Sweetland & Brother.

At the same time that Henry & Sweetlands was established, and at the same location on Albany St., the brothers formed Pulford & Sweetlands in partnership with David Maxson Pulford. The firm sold groceries and dry goods and operated until the summer of 1861. For a period, from April 1847 to April 1850, they operated as Pulford, Sweetlands & Co. with George W. Carpenter.

By 1845 James and Walter were in control of their father's paper mill. Walter appears to have become the mill manager while

James was responsible for managing the other businesses such as the grocery and dry goods store, book publishing and binding. Some of the groceries sold in the store may have come from Sweetland farms. Zadock had extensive farmlands almost surrounding the mill site and in the 1850s Walter had a farm first to the south and then to the east of his father's estate.



Cazenovia. John Elbert Gillette, 1859.

By 1850 Zadock was an invalid but the paper mill continued to operate and business must have been good for in 1853 extensive improvements were made to the paper mill at a cost of \$5,000. After a long illness Zadock died on the 12th of May 1855 at the age of 73. He was buried in the village at Evergreen Cemetery and now rests beside his wife Lucy.

At about 11 o'clock in the morning of Monday the 15th of August 1859 the main building of the paper mill caught fire which subsequently destroyed most of it. James Sweetland was there. The fire was thought to have been caused by friction in the rag cutter machinery which had just started up. There was a heavy stock of wrapping paper in the mill and a large supply of rags, of which only a small portion was saved. It was reported that the loss might not exceed \$8,000 of which \$5,000 was covered by insurance. Also reported was that great effort was made to "save some portions of the most valuable machinery". By the time of the fire the mill would have been using machinery that produced a continuous roll of paper rather than individual sheets.

Continuous paper making machinery had become the standard for modern papermaking following its 1827 introduction in the United States and in 1845 only two hand-made paper mills remained in the US. All other mills were operating paper machines.

For Sale.

VALUABLE WATER POWER FOR SALE.—The premises in the village of Cazenovia lately occupied by H. Monroe's Paper Mill, are for sale. They are located on the outlet of Cazenovia Lake and the Erieville Reservoir, and consequently there is a permanent supply of water, with 14 feet head. There are some three acres of land, a dwelling-house, good garden, and suitable outbuildings; a dam built in 1865 at a cost of \$2,200; a chimney 60 feet high, which would cost not less than \$1,000 to erect now, and a large steam-boiler, in good repair, weighing over 6 tons. The foundations of the paper-mill are in good condition. The premises can be obtained at a bargain. Terms easy. The survey of the Midland Railroad runs across the premises. **F PARSONS**
Cazenovia, Jan. 17, 1867

Cazenovia Republican, 13 February 1867, p4.

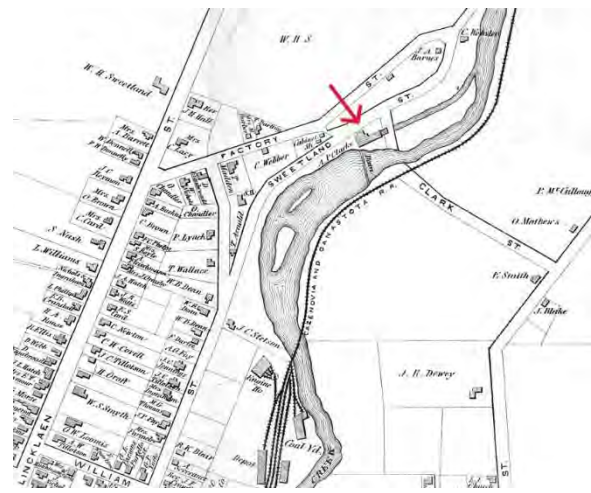
Following the fire of 1859 the brothers immediately started to rebuild and before the year was over had already raised the main building which was “considerably larger than the old one.” Henry Monroe, of Baldwinsville, soon took charge of the paper mill and in April 1863, he leased it from the Sweetland brothers for a term of five years. Monroe then set out to make paper from straw rather than linen and cotton rags. New bleaching apparatus was needed and he erected a building for that purpose at a saw mill site on the opposite bank of the creek.

Disaster struck again on the morning of Wednesday the 15th of March 1865. A great freshet started, causing a destructive flood. At 4am Thursday the first bridge, on Clark St. near the paper mill, was swept away. At 1 pm Friday the dam at the paper mill and the saw mill across the creek were gone. The flooding of Chittenango Creek caused immense damage to property in the village and along the creek. In two days, 20 bridges, 6 dams and 2 saw mills were destroyed.

A saw mill once existed across the creek from the paper mill yet we only learn about in 1853. It is identified on both Hart's map of 1853 and an 1859 map by John Elbert

Gillette. Unidentified buildings are also shown at the saw mill's location on Evans' 1852 map. The first mention of it in newspapers was in March 1863 when the *Cazenovia Republican* reported that Henry Monroe was to use the saw mill site on the opposite side of the creek. Although there was eventually to be a saw mill on the land Zadock had purchased for his paper mill there is no information as to when it was built nor is there any evidence it was built or even operated by a Sweetland.

The month following the 1865 flood the Sweetland brothers agreed to sell Monroe the now inoperative paper mill and Monroe made plans to construct a dam in place of the one swept away by the recent flood. By June he was constructing near his paper mill a “most substantial” wooden dam. Shortly following the sale, James Sweetland moved to Chicago where he remained for the rest of his life. Walter Sweetland had moved into his late father's estate and continued farming. Illness eventually struck Walter, incapacitated him and in March 1880 he sold half the estate's acreage, auctioned off the household contents and retired to Ohio.



Cazenovia. Daniel Glover Beers, 1875.

Tragedy struck again on the night of the 31st of July 1866 when the paper mill burned to the ground, although the main paper making machine was “kept from utter destruction”. The fire also weakened the new dam. Henry Monroe estimated his loss at

\$20,000 and he was insured for only \$12,000. In September 1866, Monroe, likely discouraged, sold the paper mill and surrounding property to Francis Parsons of Cazenovia. Henry did not give up in his desire to make paper and before the end of the year purchased an interest in the paper mill of Kinyon & Shumway in Baldwinsville.

Cash for Paper Rags!
HENRY & SWEETLANDS' will pay-Cash
for any quantity of clean Linen or Cotton
Paper Rags, delivered at their Store or Paper-
Mill.
Cazenovia, Dec. 9, 1847.

Madison County Whig, 12 January 1848, p3.

As yet no paper watermark has been found that is identified with either the Sweetland or Monroe paper mill in Cazenovia. Watermarks were the way papermakers signed their work. The lack of marks suggests the mill primarily made paper for printing and wrapping rather than writing or drawing. Perhaps they made an occasional batch of stationery for rural merchants. By the early nineteenth century, printing grades became a generic commodity, less likely to merit the extra expense of watermarks.

By January 1867 Parsons advertised the paper mill for sale. Although he advertised for almost three months no buyer came forward. A freshet in early May further damaged the dam by carrying away part of the woodwork. By the time Francis Parsons sold the paper mill lands in 1872 he had slightly diminished the acreage that Zadock had purchased in 1814. In 1869 he deeded an easement across the property to the Cazenovia & Canastota Railroad Company. This easement ran through the site of then destroyed saw mill on the south side of Chittenango Creek. The last portion of track laying was at the Cazenovia end which was commenced on the 2nd of August 1870 and completed on the 14th of September. 19th-century railroad easements, or rights-of-way, were typically 100 feet wide in total, extending 50 feet on each side from the center of the

track. The property which had always been cut in half by the creek was now cut into thirds.

A further reduction in acreage occurred on the 16th of November 1869 when Francis deeded a lot to Mrs. Mary Farley. It was a small house lot located on the northwest corner of the paper mill lands, on the south side of Factory Street. Mary was the widow of James Farley who had died in August of that year. It is interesting to note that the Farley lot corresponds to the present-day house addressed as 22 Corwin St., built in 1869.

Zadock's paper mill lands had also been reduced in acreage at an unknown time prior to Parsons' ownership in 1866. Charles C. Webber was a cabinet maker and by 1875 he had shop next door, to the east, of Mrs. Farley. The lot occupied by the shop was once part of the paper mill lands and was sold, perhaps as early as 1850, to Webber. An 1875 village map by Daniel Glover Beers identifies a cabinet shop at this location. The west building of the two shown was likely the Farley house, then occupied by a son, Patrick William Farley, who at the time was not a cabinet maker but a sales agent for the Remington Sewing Machine Company. The widow Mary Farley had died in the house on Christmas Day 1873.

On the 9th of April 1872, yet another spring freshet carried away the "most substantial" wooden dam and toppled the old chimney. In March 1873 Parsons sold the paper mill site to Augustus Pomeroy Clarke of Cazenovia. By May, Clarke was at work erecting suitable buildings for the manufacture of paper and in July he contracted with local carpenter Lysander Nourse to repair both dam and shore bulkheads for \$500. No sooner was the work finished when, on the 30th of June, water carried off the bulkhead at the west end, completely demolishing the south end of the foundation wall which was ready for a mill building. At the time it was stated that "Mr. Clarke's loss must exceed \$1,000." Clarke set to work again and by October he had completed repairing the dam.

Clarke may have had enough and gave up, for in mid-November 1874 he sold the old

paper mill site, along with its dam and water power rights, to the Hon. Rev. Joseph F. Crawford of Cazenovia. Beers' 1875 map identifies the paper mill as "A. P. Clarke" but the saw mill was gone and the bridge at Clark St., swept away in the 1865 flood, was still missing. There is no evidence that Clarke ever made paper on the site, let alone completed his reconstruction of the mill. The mill buildings shown on Beers' 1875 map had an uncanny resemblance to those shown on Evans' 1852 map and Beers may have simply copied them.

DISSOLUTION.

THE partnership heretofore existing between the subscribers, under the firm of Henry & Sweetlands, is this day dissolved, by mutual consent. The business of the firm will be settled by Sweetland & Brother, who are authorized to use the partnership name for that purpose. Their successors in the Book Publishing and Book Selling business, will be Messrs M.H., Grandall & Moseley, and for them, the liberal patronage heretofore bestowed upon the undersigned, is most respectfully solicited.

S. H. HENRY,
JAS. W. SWEETLAND,
W. H. SWEETLAND.

Cazenovia, April 5, 1849.

Madison County Whig, 21 June 1848, p4.

No drawing of the paper mill has been found although its location is marked on maps of 1852, 1853, 1859 and 1875. The Gurdon Evan's map of 1852 and the 1875 Beers map depict the paper mill, before and after the 1859 and 1865 fires, as a long and narrow series of adjoining buildings. A newspaper description of the fire states that below the ground floor was another floor suggesting a basement which would be expected of a building built on a steep creek bank. A dam at the west end of the mill is also either suggested or identified on all four maps as is the Sweetland house on the west side of Lincklaen St.

Little is preserved that informs us of the people who worked in the mill. Starting in 1850 the US Federal Census recorded occupations but classifications were somewhat limited.

Bishop Barber (c.1816-1862) was a paper maker working for the Sweetlands in

1859 while living on the west side of Factory St. near the paper mill. He was a native of Connecticut and was buried in Cazenovia village.

William Henry Barnes (1811-1884) was a paper maker for the Sweetlands in 1850 and in 1853 he lived on the west side of Lincklaen St. near the intersection of Factory St. and close to the mill. He left Cazenovia in 1854 and spent the rest of his life as a paper maker.

Justus W. Durkee (1834-1860), a native of Madison County, worked at the Sweetlands' paper mill in 1850. By 1855 he had left town.

Henry Augustus Johnson (1799-1870) was a long-term resident of Cazenovia and employee at the paper mill, eventually becoming foreman. In 1835 his first child was named Lucy Sweetland, presumably in honor of Zadock Sweetland's wife. Henry lived in 1853 and 1859 near the mill on the west side of Lincklaen St. and just north of the Factory St. intersection. By 1870 he was retired and was buried in the village.

George Stedman (c.1810-1861), a native of Hartford County, CT, arrived in Cazenovia in 1842. By 1850 he was employed at the paper mill, although by 1855 he was a butcher in the village.

John J. Stillman (1809-1893) was a paper maker for the Sweetlands in 1850. In 1857 he left town.

Sewell Stone (1797-1854) was a long-term resident of Cazenovia and in the 1850s, possibly earlier, he distributed the products of the paper mill and brought in rags.

The highest paid workers were foremen, vat men and couchers, who all might have been listed as paper makers. There is no mention of the layer, parter, loftsman, sizer, paper sorter, finisher or tier who were almost always men. Women and children were employed at the rag end for sorting, dressing, cutting, dust removal and cleaning. There was one job requiring considerable skill that was usually performed by women - the picker, who inspected each dried sheet for imperfections, delicately picking out specks and knots with a knife, and sorting the defective sheets.



Zadock Sweetland (6 May 1782-12 May 1855).
Evergreen Cemetery, Cazenovia, NY.
Photo by Leigh Miller.

Joseph F. Crawford erected a new building on the paper mill site in 1875 and would go on to manufacture mowers and reapers, not paper; putting an end to the paper mill of Cazenovia. The mill had made paper, and employed men of the township, for over fifty years; operating from as early as 1813, perhaps, to 1866. The site had been plagued by flood and fire and its fortunes and misfortunes would continue into the twenty-first century. There is much more to the story as history would repeat itself, making the site both famous and infamous.

Today, the site is vacant and crowded by trees. Standing on the Clark St. bridge and looking west, the remains of what might have been a dam can be seen in Chittenango Creek.

To be continued.

Eric D. Neuman, Kingston, ON. 12 April 2026.