WILLIAM BRIGHAM

BALTIMORE HATS, PAST AND PRESENT

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Brigham W.

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Содержание

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PREFACE

IT is not impossible that some useful information may be conveyed by this book. Should these pages prove of such service, their cost in labor is most cheerfully donated.

This volume is composed of a series of articles which appeared in a Trade Journal, covering a period of two years from 1887 to 1889. It must be accepted as but a brief history of an industry long identified with Baltimore.

Thanks are due the Librarian of the Maryland Historical Society and Mr. B. R. Sheriff for favors in lending rare and valuable old City directories; also to the many citizens who kindly aided and assisted in the search for needed information.

The Author.

Baltimore, 1890.

INTRODUCTORY

No. 1

PAST AND PRESENT have each their independent significance. The past gives freely to us the experiences of others, the present a suitable opportunity to improve upon what has already occurred. With our observation and acceptance of these privileges so easily obtained, we reap the benefit of their advantages and unconsciously find ourselves the gainers both in capacity and intelligence. A history of the past, giving the record of events and circumstances existing before our own day, bringing to our knowledge the accomplishments, business enterprises and undertakings of our predecessors, is a profitable study, and the reader gratifies his curiosity in observing how differently things were conducted and managed a century ago as compared with the processes of the present day, exciting a sense of wonder at the rapid progress that has been made in a comparatively short period of time. Think of it! quite within the lifetime of many of us have been the most wonderful of inventions – the steam engine, steam vessels, the telegraph and other wonders and triumphs of electricity. The wildest fancy may not be styled visionary in anticipating the appearance of things still more surprising.

Continued familiarity with the present system of making hats has the tendency in a great degree to prevent a recognition, until brought to our notice by comparison of the wide difference existing between the old and new methods, and this common every-day experience assists in making us unappreciative of the remarkable improvements that have been made in this branch of business.

Only a half a century ago the time required to make a single fur hat from the prepared material was fully a week, and the average production was two hats per day per man. With the bowing of the fur, the forming and shrinking of the bodies, and the handwork of finishing and trimming, all of which by the aid of modern science and invention is to-day done by machinery more perfectly and completely at the rate in production of twenty times that of fifty years ago, while the sewing of a straw hat, which could hardly be done in an hour by the plodding work of the hand, stitch by stitch, is, by the rapid sewing-machine, made in a minute. When we think of the largest number of stitches our mothers and sisters could take in their needlework by hand and contrast it with the result of the sewing-machine that spins its twenty-two hundred stitches a minute, we are able to gain some adequate idea of the saving of labor, and while we complacently accept these marvellous accomplishments, the question whether it be to the poor and needy a loss or gain is still an undecided problem. With all the advantages now at our command, it appears to us a matter of surprise how our forefathers, with their apparently indifferent methods, could profitably succeed in their labors. With steam engines, sewing-machines and electricity, the quick accomplishments of the present compared with the slow movements of the past tend to make one think we are living in an age of wonders amounting almost to miracles.

What would be the exclamation of the ghosts of our great-grandfathers who, with the rapid trot of an ox-team, drove to church miles away through the storms of winter to exemplify their devotion to the truth of their faith, if suddenly they could rise and observe the luxury of the present modes of transportation in convenient palace cars and palatial steamships, our comfortable and gaudy churches, and our easy ways of communicating instantly with those thousands of miles away from us? Aladdin's wonderful experiences, or the magical change by Cinderella's fairy god-mother, would appear tame to their intense surprise.

In a series of articles it is proposed to give an account of the growth of the hat manufacturing business, one of the most interesting of Baltimore's industries; how at an early period it was raised

into conspicuous prominence in common with other enterprises undertaken in the active spirit which has always characterized Baltimore merchants as among the foremost of their time. They will also treat of its gradual growth and development, followed by a temporary decline of progress caused by the Civil War and its consequences, and finally of its triumphant stride to place itself again in line with other leading industries of this enterprising metropolis, for without doubt it holds to-day an enviable position among the different trades, a position acquired by the thoroughness, determination and perseverance of those engaged in its development.

EARLY DAYS

No. 2

THE spirit of ambition and independence constituting the fundamental principles of manhood, and inspiring a nobleness of character which in time of the country's struggle for liberty helped to give her the benefits of wise counsel, noble patriotism and manly service, was early manifested by the neighboring colony of Virginia, as in the year 1662 she ventured upon a practical plan to encourage the manufacture of hats by offering a premium of ten pounds of tobacco for every domestic hat made of fur or wool. What resulted from this generous act we are not informed, but there is no evidence that it in any degree stimulated the production of hats in that colony, and it is a noted fact that hat-making to any extent has never flourished south of Baltimore. This city seems to have been the southern boundary line – the geographical limit in that direction – of hat-manufacturing. As an offset to this enterprising manifesto of Virginia is a petition in the year 1731 of the hat-makers of London to the "Lords of Trade," to enact a law forbidding the American colonists to wear hats not made in Great Britain. This law was passed, attaching a penalty of five hundred pounds sterling (twenty-five hundred dollars) for its violation.

The archives of the New Jersey Historical Society for the year 1731 show that there was one hatter in that colony, and from a history of Boston we learn that sixteen hat-makers of that town were affected by the edict of these despotic English law-makers.

In this manner were the enterprises of the new continent checked and the attempt made to crush out that spirit of progress so manifest in the brightest of the English colonies. It was the continuation of such injustice and oppression that eventually inspired a rebellious spirit to take the place of patience and submission, ending in a revolt, the termination of which secured us liberty and justice and the announcement of our complete independence on the 4th of July, 1776.

The style of hat of this period (1731) had the sides of the brim turned up, with a front of an easy curl, which, nearly resembling a cap-visor, made it in shape somewhat between a hat and cap; this seems to have been the first approach toward the "cocked" or three-cornered hat afterwards so extensively used, and to Americans the most familiar of past styles, from its being a fashion of the period of the Revolution, by which it became the prominent part of an historical costume. The arbitrary law before alluded to was afterwards modified, but an uncomfortable restriction continued to be enforced upon all manufactures, for in the year 1750 the English Parliament, among other unjust acts, enacted a law forbidding exportation of hats from one colony to another and allowing no hatter to have more than two apprentices at one time, "because the colonists, if let alone, would soon supply the whole world with hats."

The French fashion of this time had the brazen characteristic of its brim rising erect from the forehead, a style seemingly in keeping with the then irritable condition and reckless agitation of the French people.

Planché, in his "Cyclopædia of Costumes" (vol. 1, page 261), quotes a humorous description, evidently referring to this particular style, as follows: "Some wear their hats with the corners that should cover the forehead high in the air, these are called Gawkies; others do not half cover their heads, which, indeed, is owing to the shallowness of their crowns, but between beaver and eyebrows exposes a blank forehead, which looks like a sandy road in a surveyor's plan."

From the year 1750 until after the Revolution there was but little change in the general character of style in men's hats: the custom of erecting the brims by tying or looping them up prevailed. Soon the elevation of the brim of 1750 was abandoned and a change made by looping it at the points of a

triangle, producing the three-cornered or "cocked" hat. This was a becoming style we must admit, and one seemingly well suited to the independent, fearless and patriotic characteristics of our forefathers' traits, the possession of which at that time gave us all the comforts that are ours now. The "cocked" hat enjoyed a long popularity, continuing in fashion until near the close of the century, when the "steeple top" and "chimney pot" styles – slang terms for the high beavers – came into vogue, a style which Ashton, an English writer, designates as "the hideous head-covering that has martyrized at least three generations."

Departure from settled and accustomed styles created the same furore and astonishment, and subjected the venturesome individual whose inclinations led an advance in fashion to the same exposure to ridicule as affects the "swell" of the present day, and the reporters of "society doings" then were as close observers, as keen in wit, and as unmerciful in criticism as any of their kin to-day. Planché, quoting from the *London Chronicle* for 1762, refers to fashion of hats at that time as follows: "Hats," says the writer, "are now worn on the average six and three-fifths inches broad in the brim and cocked. Some have their hats open like a church spout or like the scales they weigh their coffee in; some wear them rather sharp like the nose of the greyhound, and we can designate by the taste of the hat the mood of the wearer's mind. There is a military cock and a mercantile cock, and while the beaux of St. James wear their hats under their arms, the beaux of Moorfields-Mall wear theirs diagonally over the left or right eye; sailors wear their hats uniformly tucked down to the crown, and look as if they carried a triangular apple pasty upon their heads."

That "there is nothing new under the sun" is a maxim the truth of which is often verified within the limits of fashionable manners; thus the counterpart of the present captivating custom of carrying in the public ball-room or at the private party the collapsed "opera" hat under the arm is seen in the fashion of 1762, the only difference being, not as now, to doff the hat in the house, but when promenading the street the beau was to be seen with

"A pretty black beaver tucked under his arm,
If placed on his head it might keep him too warm."

The folded hat of 1762 differed from the opera hat of the present day also in the softness of the crown, permitting its being flattened, and the brim, as if hinged front and rear, folded at the sides like the corners of a book, while the present opera hat, constructed with jointed springs, allows its cylindrical crown to be flattened down to a level with the brim, which keeps its fixed shape.

Scharf's "Chronicles of Baltimore" give the copy of an inventory made in the year 1779 of the personal effects of one Thos. Edgerton, a citizen of the Province of Maryland, and among them is his hat, described as having a gold band and feathers. This hat evidently was the celebrated cavalier style that appears in many of the portraits of Rubens, Vandycke and Rembrandt, of all styles the prettiest and most picturesque ever introduced.

The wide brim of the cavalier hat was arranged as suited the fancy of the wearer, some of whom allowed it to take its natural shape, some would wear it looped up on the side, and by others it was caught up and attached to the crown at different angles; in fact, it was modeled very much as the ladies now-a-days do the "Gainsborough," exercising their own individual fancy as to the treatment of the brim.

Identical with the interests of Baltimore were the industries of other towns of the colony of Maryland, and among the earliest records referring to the hat business are several advertisements found in the *Maryland Gazette*, published at Annapolis. In February, 1760, Chas. Diggs advertises "men's and boys' castor and felt hats." In 1761 Barnet West advertises "gold and silver band hats, just imported from London," and in April, 1761, appears the advertisement of Nathaniel Waters, of Annapolis, who announces that he has for sale "silver and gold buttons and loops for hats, and that he carries on the hat-making as usual."

About this time Annapolis, being in her palmy days, was the center of gentility and fashionable life; here was congregated the blue blood of English aristocracy, who strove to foster and cultivate the same courtly splendor and etiquette existing in old England, which brought to the venerable place the enviable fame of being considered the most fashionable of our colonial towns.

PERIOD OF THE REVOLUTION

No. 3

AN indulgence of those inborn habits of luxury and fondness for rich and expensive dress by the wealthy land owners, comprising the large majority of the population of the Southern colonies, encouraged a demand for articles more elaborate and costly than those produced within the colonial territory; hence imported fabrics were by them largely preferred to those of domestic make. The gay and festive social life, and the means easily acquired from their profitable crops of cotton and tobacco, permitted indulgence in lavish expenditures for articles of fashionable attire and household elegance.

The general customs of the people of the South had the effect of retarding the progress of ordinary trades by not affording sufficient patronage to encourage their successful undertaking; while, on the contrary, from the greater necessity with the Northern people of personal exertion and labor to provide the comforts of home life, sprung that support of manufactures which has so largely increased as to place the power and wealth of the country in their hands.

The event of the American Revolution, however, somewhat changed this aspect of affairs. The genuineness of Maryland's loyalty was certainly in one way nobly demonstrated, and by an act of patriotic self-sacrifice, gave to her an unlooked-for reward in a prosperous future. Her people quickly espousing the cause of liberty, at once rejected articles of foreign make and gave choice to those of home production, thus stimulating industries in their midst which had not before flourished from lack of encouragement and support.

Actuated by a feeling of sympathy for their fellow-citizens of Boston – whom the British Parliament in 1774 attempted to shut out from commercial intercourse with every part of the world – the citizens of Baltimore called a town meeting, unanimously recommending a general congress of delegates, to meet at Annapolis, to take action against this indignity on American liberties.

The congress met June 22, 1774, offering their heartiest support not only in resolution, but in the more substantial way of money and food, as aid to their Boston friends in the resistance to British tyranny and oppression, supplementing these patriotic resolutions by one making the importation of English goods an act disloyal to the sentiment of American hearts.

The earliest manufacturing hatter in Baltimore, of whom any definite knowledge can be obtained, was David Shields, who kept store at No. 14 Gay street. As the location was on the east side of Gay and the seventh house from the corner of Baltimore street, it probably was about half-way between Baltimore and Fayette streets. Here he sold to his patrons the products of his "back shop" or factory, which was located on the south side of East, now Fayette street, at a point half-way between Gay and Frederick streets. Mr. Shields' father was from Pennsylvania. David Shields was born in the year 1737, and his descendants of to-day include some of the wealthiest and most refined citizens of Baltimore. In Scharf's "Chronicles of Baltimore" his name is mentioned, in connection with others, in the year 1769 as aiding by a general subscription in procuring an engine for the extinguishment of fires; this engine was for the "Mechanical Fire Company," and was the first machine of its kind in Baltimore, costing the sum of two hundred and sixty-four dollars.

Unfortunately, the information gained of Mr. Shields' business career is so meagre as to leave much to the imagination, but it is natural to suppose that in 1769, being thirty-two years of age, he must have been established in business.

That Mr. Shields was a public-spirited citizen is further proven by his connection with the First Baptist Society, being one of a committee constituted for the purpose of purchasing a lot upon which to erect a church; this was in 1773, two years before the Revolution. The church was built on Front

street, upon the site now occupied by the Merchants' Shot Tower, and was the first Baptist Church erected in Baltimore.

The *Federal Gazette* announces the death of Mr. Shields, October 4, 1811, in the seventy-fourth year of his age; his funeral taking place from his residence, which was over his place of business, on Gay street.

What may have been the actual condition of the hat business of Baltimore just before the Revolution has been difficult to ascertain. Mr. Shields must have been in business during this period, and it is more than probable that in a town of the size of Baltimore at that date there must have been others engaged in this branch of business, but how many and who they were cannot be ascertained. It is very likely that the restriction placed by English rule upon most manufacturing industries prior to the Revolution operated detrimentally upon this industry also, and while the ordinary kind of wool felt hats were made by the hatter in his own shop, undoubtedly most of the fashionable hats sold and worn at that time were of English or French make. Paris (which then, as well as now, was the axis upon which revolved the world of fashion) possibly supplied the wants of Baltimore's highborn gentry, always famous for exquisite dress and refined taste, with the French chapeau – the *ton* of those days.

As there are no existing detailed statistics of the business of Baltimore during the Revolutionary War, the record of some business firms has been entirely lost, and although some trades have received slight mention in the published histories of the city, a trace of the existence of but two hatters, who afterwards continued in business, is to be found. Since it is known as a fact that fourteen hatters were engaged in business in Baltimore, not later than ten years after the close of the war, we have a right to suppose that more than two must have been in business during the existence of the war.

Among the proceedings of the "Council of Safety" of Maryland, organized at the outbreak of the war, is found the following order: "March 2, 1776. The Council of Safety authorize Major Gist to contract for fifty camp-kettles and as many *hats* as may be necessary for the battalion, not to exceed 7 shillings apiece." Again, April 6, 1776, "Commissary of Stores of Baltimore is ordered to send to Annapolis 200 of the hats arrived from Philadelphia." Why Baltimore hatters did not supply the needed hats for Maryland militia we cannot say, but probably a sharp competition for so *large* a contract wrested it from them.

The adoption of the "cocked" hat in its various forms as a portion of the military costume of the Continental Army brought about the necessity of making a distinction between civil and military wear.

After the close of the American Revolution France was in a state of civil insurrection, and the French "chapeau" of that time was constructed upon a plan somewhat similar to that of the "cocked" hat. With the termination of the French Revolution appeared the "steeple-top" hat, having a conical crown with stiff curled brim, drooping front and rear, being trimmed with a very wide band and ornamented in front with a huge metal buckle, a change radical enough from those preceding it, but admitting a question as to its comparative intrinsic beauty or to its being a more becoming part of male attire; the style withal certainly proved acceptable, for with slight modifications it has continued and is now embodied in the fashionable silk hat of the present time.

Thus with the opening of the nineteenth century commenced the era of what may be correctly termed the *high* hat. Ashton, in "Old Times," says of the style of 1790-95: "The 'cocked' hat had gone out, and the galling yoke of the 'chimney pot' was being inaugurated, which was as yet of limp felt."

In fashions prevailing at the opening of the new century, particularly those of wearing apparel both for ladies and gentlemen, Paris took the lead, and though with many articles to-day Parisian designs and ideas secure the largest share of popularity, yet in regard to hats for gentlemen it can proudly be said that American-made hats are ahead in point of style and quality, and are no longer dependent upon foreign ingenuity for assistance in securing for them a ready sale; in fact, no American industry to-day stands in a more enviable position relatively to foreign manufactures than does that of hat-making.

The fancy for sentimental hits and political phrases indulged in by modern hatters seems to have been the rage at an earlier period, as is evident from the following, published in the London *Times* of December 4, 1795: "If the young men of the present day have not much wit in their heads they have it at least in their *hats*." Among the pleasantries we have seen in this way are the following: "Not yours," "Hands off," "No vermin," and "Rip this as you would a hot potato," and other charming sallies of *refined* and *elegant* vivacity.

But the wittiest linings are the political ones. The other day we observed one perfectly clean and tidy in which was written: "Avaunt! Guinea Pig," and on the lining of a very powdery hat that lay in the window of the same room were inscribed the two monosyllables "Off-crop." "Guinea pig" and "Off-crop" were probably local political distinctions of the day.

AFTER THE REVOLUTION

No. 4

NOT until after the Revolution is it apparent that any attempt was made in Baltimore to concentrate the hatting industry into a legitimate business upon any extensive scale, or to separate the manufacturing from the retail branch of business; in fact, far into the new century was it the practice of those who manufactured extensively for the trade, to continue to keep in operation also a *retail* establishment.

The general system of conducting the hat business at the time of which we are now writing was for the hatter to have his "back shop" in the rear and accessible to the "front shop," where the proprietor and his "prentice hand" made the needed supply for the existing or future small demand likely to come; for hats in those days were "built" for service, not for show, and in a manner quite different from those suited to the modern requirement of almost a monthly change in style. Then the principle demand came from maturing youth, desiring to assume suitable dignity for entrance into manhood, by procuring a "beaver" which, unless he lived to a patriarchal age, might serve him during his natural life, and that, too, without fear of banishment from society for being out of the fashion.

In the first "Baltimore City Directory," printed in the year 1796, appear the names of nineteen hatters; the business locations of some of the number, it is curious to observe, being at places hardly recognizable by those living at the present day.

Gay street, prior to the year 1808, extended from the water to Griffith's bridge (now called Gay-street bridge), beyond which it was called Bridge street; German lane is now German street; East street is Fayette street, and the euphonious name of Cowpen alley is now dignified by that of Garrett street. Baltimore street was then called Market street, and for a long time after was often designated by either name.

The following names and localities of hatters are found in the Baltimore City Directory published in 1796:

Richard Averson, German lane, between Howard and Liberty streets.
Joseph Burnet, Welcome alley, Federal Hill.
Peter Bond, 13 Bridge street, Old Town.
William Branson, 131 Market street.
Peter Beze, 31 Charles street.
Frederick Deems, Cowpen alley.
Joseph Burneston, 17 George street, Fell's Point.
" Shop, 19 George street, Fell's Point.
George Littig, 141 Market street, Shop on "The Causeway."
Arnold Livers, Shop, 24 South Calvert street.
Aaron Mattison, Shop, East street, between Calvert and Gay.
William Mockbee, East street, between St. Paul's lane and Charles street.
Gasper Morelli, 36 Charles street.
John Parks, Shop, 14 Light street.
Jacob Rogers, 29 South street.
George Smith, 101 Bond street.
David Shields, 14 North Gay street.
John Steiger, 250 Market street.
John Underwood, Alley between St. Paul's lane and Calvert street.

Daniel Weaver, 19 Front street.

Judging from localities here given, ten of this number were engaged in business as principals, the others were probably journeymen, working at their trade in the various shops in the town.

John Parks, who did business at 14 Light street, had his residence at 137 Market street, about the location now occupied by Clogg & Son as a Shoe store. In the year 1802, No. 137 Market street was occupied by John Walraven, Hardware and Silversmith, and John and Andrew Parks are in the Dry-goods business, at No. 2 Market space.

William Branson, at 131 Market street, appears to have continued business in the same place up to the year 1810. During the years 1800-2 the firm was Branson & Son; their store was the second house west of Grant street, then called Public alley; the place is now occupied by Geo. Steinbach & Son as a Toy establishment.

Aaron Mattison, whose shop, in 1796, was on East street, in 1799 associated his son with himself in business, locating at 16 North Gay street, next door to David Shields. In 1802 Wm. Mattison, probably the son, opened a store at 180 Market street; the firm continuing at 16 N. Gay street as Aaron Mattison & Son. The next year W. Mattison appears at 72 Market street, following which no further record is found of this firm.

No. 180 Market street was two doors east of Charles, on the north side, now occupied by Towner & Landstreet's Rubber store. No. 72 Market street was also on the north side, second house east from Lemon, now Holliday street.

Peter Bond, whose location was No. 13 Bridge street, continued as a hatter in the same place until the year 1806; afterwards he appears to have changed the character of his business, for in 1807 he is found to be a "storekeeper" at No. 9 Bridge street. No. 13 was on the north side of what is now Gay street, the seventh or eighth house beyond the bridge over the Falls. Peter Bond was a member of the committee of "Vigilance and Safety" organized by the citizens of Baltimore in the dark days of anxiety and trouble preceding the invasion of the city by the British in September, 1814.

Richard Averson had his residence on German lane, between Howard and Eutaw streets. At that time there was but one dwelling-house on German lane between Hanover and Liberty streets. German lane, now German street, then extended only from Charles to Greene street. Mr. Averson kept his hat store at No. 4 County wharf, which was the lower terminus of South Calvert street; he had for his neighbors Gerard T. Hopkins, Peter Cox and George Mason, Grocers.

David Shields continued in business at his old locality, 14 North Gay street, certainly until the year 1808, and probably up to the time of his death in 1811. In 1819 his place is found to be occupied by Francis Foster as a hat store.

Arnold Livers would seem to have been the most peripatetic of hatters, and must have caused no little stir and comment among his fellow-tradesmen. Until 1801 he appears as solitary Arnold Livers, carrying on the hat business at 24 South Calvert street, where probably he had a retail "shop." In 1802 the Directory records: "Arnold Livers, 24 South Calvert street," and on Fayette street (probably his residence), also 7 °Cumberland Row; Livers & Atkinson, 35 Fell street, and Livers & Atkinson, 10 George street, Fell's Point. In 1804 Arnold Livers is still at 24 South Calvert street, also at 70 Market space, and George Atkinson has succeeded to the firm of Livers & Atkinson. In 1810 it is Livers & Grover, 39 South, corner of Water street. From this time Mr. Livers disappears entirely; one may imagine what a commotion this evidently unsettled man of business must have raised during ten years of these varied and numerous changes, and possibly others of which the Directories give no account.

So rapidly and effectively does time erase the evidence of former labors, and so quickly is the past forgotten, that one is surprised and disappointed at not finding more proof on record of what these worthy apostles of work may have done.

Of the nineteen whose names are in the Directory of 1796, traces of the personal history of but two of the number can be found: these are David Shields, before alluded to, and John Parks. In Griffith's "Annals of Baltimore," John Parks is mentioned in the year 1784 as subscribing ten pounds

to the funds raised by citizens for the purpose of elevating the courthouse to admit the extension of Calvert street. Then the courthouse stood in the bed of Calvert street, which it spanned, where since has been erected and now stands Battle Monument, commemorating the loss of Baltimore's brave citizens, who gave their lives in defence of their homes against British invasion in 1814.

Among the patriots whose names are inscribed upon this monument by a grateful people, desiring in such way to honor and perpetuate the memory of those who sacrificed themselves in the defence of their homes and firesides, appears that of Joseph Burneston, a hatter, who is found in 1796 doing business at 19 George street, Fell's Point. Thus, while little else is known of Mr. Burneston's career, he is immortalized by a noble deed, and his name is handed down to coming generations to show what sacrifices were made in securing to us that freedom and comfort we now possess, sacrifices which should inspire us with the determination that when similar calls come we will be ready to answer as unhesitatingly as did this patriotic hatter.

From the location of Mr. Burneston's place of business it may be inferred that he was only a hat-maker, having no "front shop" or retail establishment, but was merely a maker of hat bodies to be sold to retailers, who themselves finished and trimmed them ready for sale.

Of the hatters of 1796 there is but one through whom can be connectedly traced Baltimore's hat industry from before the Revolution down to the present time; that one is Jacob Rogers, whose long-continued business career brings personal knowledge of him down to a time quite within the recollection of some now living. Singularly enough, by this solitary instance are we able to connect hatting in 1769 with that of 1890, for it is known that Mr. Rogers learned his trade with Mr. David Shields, who was in business in 1769, and engaged in their occupation to-day are several who were apprenticed to Mr. Rogers.

EARLY IN THE XIX CENTURY

No. 5

SO wonderful were the recuperative powers of the American people, after undergoing the trials and sacrifices consequent upon a protracted struggle for liberty, as to surprise the most sanguine advocates of self-government.

Following the train of war came ruin and desolation, but freedom was the birthright of the people, who, though sorely tried by a tremendous outlay in blood and money, were by no means disheartened or discouraged, and without delay they cheerfully took in hand the task of renovation with the same resolute determination that characterized the conflict with their enemies.

The contributions of Maryland to the country's wants during the war were always generous in both men and money. Baltimore, after recovering from the exhaustion consequent upon her constant participation in the seven long years' contest for freedom, commenced the foundation of her future commercial greatness, and early in the present century she had attained a commerce greater in extent than that of many older seaport towns. Baltimore "clippers" were celebrated for their marvelous speed, and their white sails were to be seen in the ports of every foreign nation.

Baltimore kept steadily advancing in population and wealth; compared with her rivals, she was precocious. The town was settled in the year 1730, and its increase shows evidence of growth that must have created a surprise in its early days similar to that now experienced by the development in a few weeks of a full-fledged Western city, with its thousands of inhabitants, from its humble foundation of a few straggling hamlets. New York was settled in 1614, Boston in 1630, Philadelphia in 1682, each being well on in existence before Baltimore was born.

At the close of the Revolutionary War the population of Baltimore was 5000; in 1800 it was 26,614. The first United States census, taken in 1810, places the number at 35,580, and in 1820 it had grown to be a prosperous commercial city of 62,738 inhabitants.

The persistent patriotism of Baltimore throughout the Revolutionary War was proverbial; the strong intelligence of a majority of its citizens, though of foreign birth, gave them an intuitive knowledge of the distinction between right and wrong, and a fine sense of honor and justice prompted them to act as well as theorize, consequently their personal convictions as to the allegiance they owed their adopted country enabled the city of their choice to assume a strong and patriotic attitude in behalf of America's struggle, and incited them to act with the native element in expelling from their midst all who indulged in hostile acts or expressions. But one sentiment prevailed in Baltimore during the period of the war – that of loyalty to country. The courteous attention and honor paid by citizens to many of those who attained distinction in the war lent great assistance to Baltimore in quickly recovering from the damage she had sustained, and gave to the city a renown for hospitality which has remained by her to the present day.

Washington, Lafayette, Count Rochambeau, and many others united in unrestricted praises of Baltimore's patriotism and liberality, and General Vallette, who commanded a French division of troops, declared: "I will never forget the happy days I have passed among you, citizens of Baltimore, and I beg you will believe that your remembrance will be forever dear to my memory."

The famous General Greene, of Rhode Island, on his way homeward from the war in the South, stopped in Baltimore and gave his impression of the city in 1783 as follows:

"Baltimore is a most thriving place. Trade nourishes, and the spirit of building exceeds belief. Not less than three hundred houses are put up in a year. Ground rents are little short of what they are in London. The inhabitants are all men of business."

The period from 1800-30, although interrupted by the war of 1812, when the city was made the immediate battle-ground, was marked by a wonderful growth in both commercial and industrial occupations, and, in common with the general prosperity of the place, hat-making also flourished. In 1810 Maryland is found, from the United States census reports, to have taken the lead in the production of fur hats. Aside from the custom with some retailers of making and finishing the hats they sold, we find in the year 1818 several firms engaged in the *manufacture* of hats. The products of these factories were distributed throughout the entire South, a section the natural resources of which enabled its people to easily recuperate from the war and quickly become large purchasers and consumers of goods which they did not themselves manufacture. In addition to this desirable field of business was the region of the "Far West," then comprising Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee, the rapid increase of which in population by emigration greatly enlarged the demand for the products of Baltimore's hat industry. This being the most accessible seaport city, regular traffic by wagon trains was established, connecting Baltimore with the West, and giving to the former such superior advantages as to enable its enterprising merchants to secure a large trade, which they long and tenaciously held.

The city directories of that period were not, as now-a-days, issued annually, but at intervals of three or four years, and while furnishing much valuable information, cannot be relied upon for complete correctness, the main object of the compiler being to get the names of house-holders and business men, while many who were temporarily employed, and all who were unmarried though permanently employed, were omitted from registration. Thus the Directory of 1818 does not give a full list of hatters in this city at that time, for while it appears that there were in operation in Baltimore twenty-five hat establishments in the year 1818 (five or six of which were extensive manufactories), the Directory does not show any fair proportion of the number that then must have been engaged in the occupation of hat-making. It may be safely estimated from the extent and the activity of this branch of business at that time, that it gave employment to at least three hundred hands.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.