

# HISTORY OF THE BARBOUR FLAX SPINNING COMPANY, PATERSON, NEW JERSEY

Taken from  
*"The Co-Operator,"*  
newspaper of the Barbour Mills  
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The parent establishment of this Company, that of William BARBOUR & Sons, is in Lisburn, Ireland, where their mills have been running since 1785. In 1864, when the duty was taken from Flax Machinery, the house of William Barbour & Sons determined to establish branch works in Paterson. The manufacture of Shoe Threads and Linen Thread, where are largely used in various leather manufactures, was begun on a liberal scale in mills called "Passaic Flax Thread Works," driven by water power and employing 450 hands. This mill was also known as "Passaic Mill No. 2" and was formerly run by John COLT, for the weaving of fine sheetings and cotton duck. The mill is known at present as "Barbour Flax Spinning Co., Spruce Street Mill."

An extensive department was established for the spooling of Linen Threads, imported in a bundle. A manufactory known as "Arkwright Mills" was also started for the manufacture of Flax Twines and the coarser grades of goods. The business steadily increased from 1864 to 1872 when the foundations of the Grand Street Mill were laid and additional machinery was ordered from Ireland, but the revenue oppression of 1872 checked the enterprise. In 1877, the erection of this mill proceeded. It was originally 50 feet front on Grand Street by 250 feet deep, and four stories high. It was one of the finest mills in this section of the country at that time and it had scarcely been stocked with machinery and occupied before plans were laid to increase the floor space and, in 1878 the building was enlarged to 50 by 400 feet.

In February 1879, the Spruce Street Mill was destroyed by fire. It was at once rebuilt, an imitation in all respects of the Grand Street Mill.

In the year 1881, the present Barbour Flax Spinning Co., A.H. Hart Mill, was constructed and was then known as the Granite Mill, from the stone used in its construction.

In 1889, a third addition to the Grand Street Mill was made, making its present size 500 feet, and since this time, numerous buildings have been added, the principal ones being the 1903 building, facing on Grand Street, and the new storehouse, on the corner of Dale Avenue and Grand Street, which was built one year later.

The Grand Street Mill still has on its staff several actively engaged employees whose term of service dates back to the early constructive period. We give herewith the names of a few of our real "old timers":

<b>NAME</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>EMPLOYED</b>	<b>LENGTH OF SERVICE</b>
Bart LYNCH	Foreman – Printing Dept	1865	53 years
Michael FARNON	Dryer	1870	48 years
Alex. GRAHAM	Wood Turning Foremen	1873	45 years
Robert McCLEAN	Foreman – Granite Mch. Shop	1875	43 years
Maggie HOPPER	Patent Twister	1878	40 years
Stewart YOUNG	Chief Engineer	1878	40 years
Rosie BURNS	Dry Spinner	1880	38 years
John STEVENS	Foreman – Flax Store	1880	38 years
Wm. DONNELLY	Foreman – Yarn Reeling	1880	38 years

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