

MSS 154 Henry Cater (1923 -) Collection, 1914 - 1985

.3 cubic feet 1 document box, 1 folder of negatives, 1 box of positive prints, 1 box with 2 VHS tapes and 1 8mm reel, 1 oversize folder

Introduction

Henry Cater collected material about the history of Newry, South Carolina, and in particular, the Courtenay Manufacturing Company. This textile mill was the focus of the village which grew around it until its closure in 1975. The material, accessions 87-92 and 88-25, was donated by Cater during the survey of textile records conducted by Bryan McKown that was funded by the J.E. Sirrine Foundation. Karen Ellenberg processed the collection in 1993 as part of the South Carolina Textile Records Research Access Project which was funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Michael Kohl revised the register in 1996.

Biography and Corporate History

Henry Cater was born on March 11, 1923 to R. J. and Addie Cater of Newry, South Carolina. He worked for Courtenay Manufacturing Company from 1952 to 1964 when he served as Treasurer of Oconee County until 1987. By the 1980s, Cater had collected material about the history of Newry as part of efforts to preserve its history.

William Ashmead Courtenay was granted a state charter in 1893 to incorporate a firm for the manufacturing, spinning, dyeing, printing, and selling of all cotton and woolen goods which was capitalized at \$300,000. That year, he purchased land in Oconee County and began building his textile mill at a place he called Newry in memory of his father's home in County Down, Ireland. The following year, on June 14, 1894, the Courtenay Manufacturing Company began operations using water power. By 1903, the firm was producing fine sheetings for converting purposes with 19,440 ring spindles and 635 forty inch looms.

Captain Courtenay died in 1908 and the Courtenay family continued to manage the business until the 1920s when the firm was sold to Isaqueena Mills of Central, South Carolina with C.W.L. Gassaway as president and treasurer. It produced pajama checks and carded broadcloth with 25,344 spindles in 1927 and used a combination of water and steam generated power from three boilers. In 1930, the stock and property was sold to Cannon Mills in North Carolina which had served as its selling agent prior to the purchase. At that time it employed 365 people and purchased 5,500 bales of cotton.

The Abney Company bought the mill in 1939 and by 1943 employed 450 people producing cotton warp, rayon and cotton, and rayon filling using 6,500 bales. After World War II, Courtenay Manufacturing operated as a unit of Abney producing print cloths until its closure in 1975. The mill houses were sold in 1959, primarily to their tenants.

Scope and Content

The collection consists primarily of clippings and photographs of Newry

which Cater gathered. It includes photocopies of mill baseball rosters from the 1920s and some pay stub envelopes from the 1930s. There is an 8mm film "Newry in the Fall of 1938" which has been copied onto VHS tape. The oversize material includes a blueprint of the Courtenay Manufacturing Company, 1920 and time sheets from 1914.

The Courtenay Manufacturing Company Records, Mss 162, provide extensive documentation of the operations of the firm.

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