

The Waterville Foundry



The Waterville Foundry and Manufacturing Company was located on today's Route 315, or Buell Ave., just outside of Waterville. At the time, it was called Mill Street. At one time, the building was a distillery and then a brewery, as were many buildings in that area in the early 1800s.

At first, the original business, founded in 1837 by Bachus A. Beardsley, made mills designed to grind bark for tanning leather and iron hopper grinding, which were based on an invention by Oliver Harris. In 1887, his son, Brace R. Beardsley took over and focused on producing iron hopper paint mills.

Simpson McLean and Albert D. Kimball purchased the business in 1895, under the name Waterville Foundry and Manufacturing Company. They expanded the business to include, besides the paint manufacturing machinery, power hop presses and stoves, and general machine work. Under that ownership, the company completed the carriages for the soldier's monument cannon, erected to honor Civil War dead, located in Connecticut. The establishment was also excellently equipped with the "best machinery and appliances for doing a general repair and jobbing business". (Waterville Times, 1896.) A complete mail catcher and deliverer for trains was made by the Waterville Foundry and Manufacturing company and were placed on some designated mail railroad cars for actual service.

During that time, fire was discovered in the roof of the main building. The damage was quickly extinguished, thanks to the prompt work of a bucket brigade.

T. Harold Townsend of Canton purchased the interest of Simpson McLean in 1905. McLean went to live in Herkimer, where he operated a grocery store. Then the business was owned by Townsend and A. D. Kimball, but not for long. Albert Kimball leased his interest in the Waterville Foundry and Manufacturing Co. for one year, from October 1, to Townsend. At the end of the year, he sold his share to his partner for \$4,000. He wanted to do some repairs on his farm near Utica, and then take a trip south. T. Harold Townsend became the sole proprietor.

Not too long after the transfer, however, the shop was destroyed by another fire, in 1907.

This was more serious than the previous one, resulting in up to a loss of \$10,000.

After about three months, though, rebuilding was well underway. The new plant was to be a modern (by 1907)



A mill for mixing paint, chemicals, dyes, inks

standards with up-to-date machinery. Some of the equipment to be used was rebuilt, but most was new. The new structure was built of stone, one story high. Ten machinists were employed there. During this time, about 75% of carbon paper in the United States was made with ink ground in machines at the Waterville Foundry. The Foundry manufactured mills and mixers for grinding and mixing paints, inks and chemicals. The business of manufacturing these particular types of machines was so great that the manufactured products were shipped to all parts of the United States and to many foreign countries.

The fire wasn't the only major event at that time. In March, 1911, flooding washed away part of one bank leading to the Waterville Foundry, cutting off their water supply, forcing the business to shut down temporarily.

In 1912, T. Harold Townsend died at the age of 35, and the business was taken over by his wife Katherine which, by all accounts, was operated very successfully; she turned out to be an astute businesswoman. Upon her death in 1917, the firm was run by a stock company. W.G. McLean was president and treasurer; George Hovey, vice-president; Charles S. McLean, secretary and assistant treasurer; and Clayton McLean, Superintendent. W.G. McLean and C.S. McLean were nephews of Simpson McLean. Clayton McLean was a brother of W.G. McLean. The company was incorporated in 1918 and continued the manufacture of paint mills, for which it had become famous. In 1925, electric power was installed. In 1936, a quantity of about two tons of metal, mostly new castings for paint mills, was stolen. The theft was discovered by Clayton McLean, Plant Superintendent.



The stock company dissolved in 1943, and in 1946 it was sold to Stanley Kozak and Joseph Janus, both of Clinton, as announced by Charles McLean, president of the company. The sale included all of the stock of the corporation, as well as all patterns and

real estate. The new owners planned to recondition the plant and continue operations along the same lines, with some additions. They planned to keep the same name.

The Waterville Foundry continued for some years in the same manner, but was abandoned around 1960. In 1966 it was announced that the Foundry was purchased by Jenny Industries, Inc., of Rome.

The sale was confirmed by Harry R. Jenny, company president. Jenny didn't reveal any plans for reactivating the foundry. "We bought it for a reason, but I don't want to discuss our plans publicly now," Jenny said. Jenny Industries presently employs 20 persons at its plant at 508 W. Liberty St., Rome, where electrical insulation machinery and insulation is manufactured.

Jenny Industries had been in business since 1924, and was incorporated in 1945. Its products were sold to major electrical equipment manufacturers, including General Electric and Westinghouse, by sales representatives across the nation. When asked how many persons may be hired to staff the new operations at the Waterville Foundry, Jenny said, "I don't know." He stated that workmen had already started cutting brush which grew outside the idle plant. Plans were formulated to refurbish the existing buildings. It was sold for an undisclosed price by several stockholders, including Stanley P. Kozak, former plant manager. (from the September 28, 1966 Utica Observer-Dispatch)

It's possible that Jenny Industries didn't last long in that location, as the next mention of the building is the purchase of it in 1970 by Raymond Clark and William Humphreys, who established C&H Plastics, custom injection molding business. They were there until 1995, when they moved to the mill property on Conger Ave.

The building is now known as Pumila Pizza Crust Company.

