



MARSHALL STEAM MUSEUM

at Auburn Heights Preserve

A Quick Marshall History

The Marshall family established a presence in Kennett Township, Pennsylvania in the mid-1760's when John Marshall (1735-1815) settled in an area now known as Marshall's Bridge, PA a short distance from Auburn (now Yorklyn) DE. Purchasing the 174-acre property known as Joshua Taylor's Mill for \$1,090 from Joseph Pierce and James Bennett who were settling William Levis' estate, John would continue operation of the saw mill on the property which he named "Marshallvale" Later a flour mill would be added and John's son Robert (1771-1859) continued the family grist milling business. By the mid-1800s, Robert's youngest son Thomas Smedley Marshall (1818-1887) recognized an opportunity and converted the grist mill to the making of paper.

The paper mill became known as "The Homestead Mill" and could produce 2-tons of rag paper a week. Papers were the primary product produced by the Marshall family by the 1870s. Products of the Homestead Mill were binder's board (the stiff, thick paper used for the ends and bindings of books; often covered with linen or leather) along with paper that later had patterns printed on it for wall coverings, heavy grades of roofing and building papers, and a high-quality sorghum-based printing paper. The paper for "The Village Record", a weekly newspaper printed in West Chester, Pennsylvania was made at the Homestead Mill. Thomas' growing papermaking business soon included his two sons, Israel Way Marshall and Thomas Elwood Marshall, who grew the business. The business, now run by the Marshall family, became known as Thomas S. Marshall & Sons.

After Thomas passes away, his sons Israel and Elwood greatly expand the paper business by purchasing the former Wood iron rolling mill at Wooddale and the burned-out Clark woolen factory in Auburn/Yorklyn. In the middle 1890s the Marshalls began making vulcanized fibre container products at a plant in Kennett Square, PA. In 1899 they build a new mill in Yorklyn, DE, the Insulite Mill, to manufacture vulcanized fibre for their Fibre Specialty Products Company in Kennett Square. Eventually a process to make vulcanized fibre continuously using their endless fibre machine is patented by the Marshalls and they form the National Fibre & Insulation Company in the early 1900s. In 1922 National Fibre & Insulation merges with their biggest competitor, American Vulcanized Fibre and National Vulcanized Fibre Company is born. Yorklyn would become the vulcanized fibre capitol of the world well into the 20th century. Israel and Elwood's sons continued a family presence in the fibre business into the mid-1900s.

Thomas' elder brothers Caleb and John took an interest in the iron industry and set up operations north of Kiamensi, DE. The area would eventually become known as Marshallton, DE. The Marshall brothers invent and patent a process to make the first galvanized sheet iron manufactured in this country and operate additional iron rolling mills in Philadelphia, PA. The Marshalls develop and offer numerous rolled sheet iron and steel products with various surface treatments. Caleb and John's sons would continue operating the business into the early 1900s.

The fourth brother of Thomas S. Marshall, Abner, would discover Kaolinite on his property and become the first Delawarean to mine the mineral in the state. Kaolin became a sought after white clay for making fine china and the deposits uncovered in the Hockessin-Yorklyn area of Delaware were exceptionally pure and produced a very fine quality china that equaled or surpassed what was available from Europe at the time.