

Harriman New Method Laundry

It seems incongruous for a historical paper to be written about a business venture, for they come a dime a dozen in a commercial community. But in this case it reveals something about the one industry town that we were. For that reason it is important.

The Village of Assabet, later incorporated as the town of Maynard, was a community created by The Assabet Manufacturing Company for a handy supply of workers. It controlled the water rights of The Assabet River to Lake Boone and beyond, thus keeping complete control of what industry would enter town to compete for the working force. Obviously, self-interest on the part of the company, and later American Woolen, which took over that bankrupt company, would not allow any other concern to enter town consequently.

A newspaper article of May 15, 1903, speaks of The Harriman New Method Laundry as being the second largest industry in Maynard with seventy-five employees! What a revealing statement. And the only reason that a business of even this small size came into being was that The Harriman Brothers were local men, their father before them was one of the pioneer businessmen of the community.

The Laundry, the same article continues, was started in September, 1890, by Frank S. Harriman with his brother Rowland and a lady assistant as help in two small rooms, 20 x 34 and 10 x 15 in The J.K. Harriman Building on Main Street in the west end. The next year the two brothers became partners. The building at that time had a grocery store, barbershop, photo studio, cigar shop, two tenements, and a hall. The Laundry little by little absorbed all the space in the building so it finally had 15,000 square

feet in 8 rooms on three floors. The annual business in the year of the article was running between \$50,000 and 60,000 a year, covering fifteen agencies in thirty-nine towns within a thirty mile radius of Maynard. Pay for 45 hour week for females was 7 dollars- 11 dollars for males. Horse drawn vehicles were replaced in 1905, August 4- by large auto cars built to take laundry baskets.

However, by May 7, 1909, The Laundry moved to Hudson, had assignment made to creditors, stockholders sold Laundry finally to Jeremiah O'Neil of Hudson (September 24, 1909) for \$3000, leaving The Harriman Brothers free to incorporate with Riverview Laundry at Concord Junction (November 5, 1909) under the name of Harriman Company.

May 13, 1910 the paper informs us the old Laundry building on the corner of Main and Harriman Court is to be converted into tenements by present owners.

And so, this little giant after 19 years ceased to exist and offered no more competition for workers to American Woolen.