With new fabrics and new ideas,
Bates looks to its second century with a vigorous determination
to continue its tradition of breaking traditions.

The foreman pointed to the man carefully buffing the shuttles down to a satin smoothness. "That's Napoleon McGraw," he said. "Couldn't open the plant mornings without him."

"How long's he been with you?"

"1883...that makes it just 67 years."

"Bet he's seen some changes around here."

"He surely has. You know, there's not a single machine in the plant that was being made when he first joined us. As a matter of fact, neither of the fibres this Division is working on was even invented then."

The walk continued down the long line of looms, beating out the rhythm of production, three beats to the second, carrying the shiny rayon and nylon yarns through the warps. The floor was spotless. The room was air conditioned. There was fluorescent lighting above.

Talk to Napoleon McGraw of the Androscoggin Division. Talk to Percy and Rose Jones, who have put in a combined total of 121 years with Edwards. Talk to the young man peering into the microscope at the modern laboratory. Talk to the girl who started last week on the new winders. Talk to the engineer putting in the new looms. Talk to any one of the 6500 men and women who make up the Bates Manufacturing Company today. Talk to them, but be sure to listen too. Each will throw a different light on Bates operations. Each in his own way is making industrial history as well as cloth. And every one is a member of a Company that has existed on the American scene for one hundred years.

One thing will impress you about your conversations. Few, except some of the old-timers, will attach significance to that hundred-year record. The Bates Manufacturing Company to them is a thing of todays and tomorrows, not of yesterdays. The
talk will be of "Look at the new machines we've put in" or "Here's a new fabric we've just put on the looms," not of "Isn't it wonderful...we've been doing this for a hundred years."

That is perhaps the outstanding reason why Bates is a good bet to complete a second hundred years, for its traditions are ancient but its outlook is the outlook of youth. It is a company that says, "Maybe we can do it better."

You get a feeling that Benjamin Bates would be proud of the Company he fathered; for today it is quite a company, the largest manufacturing enterprise in the state of Maine, with sales offices selling to thousands of customers all over the world.

In Lewiston, the "industrial heart of Maine," you'll find the Androscoggin, Bates, and Hill Divisions of the present Company, as well as the general and executive offices and the laboratory. Up in Augusta, the state capital, stands the Edwards Division. Down in Saco, the York Division is just completing its 118th year in business. Between them they turned out 129,853,027 yards of fabric made from cotton, rayon, and nylon in 1949, sold it for $55,070,425, paid $18,534,401 in wages and employee benefits, $1,325,211 in dividends, and $2,110,724 in taxes, in addition to buying $2,499,175 worth of new machinery and equipment and paying $30,496,317 to organizations and individuals for raw materials and services.

How was all this accomplished? Let us look back to the days in the mid-nineteenth century when Benjamin Bates was developing the idea that was to become the Bates Manufacturing Company.

Benjamin Bates first saw Lewiston, Maine, in 1847. The previous half century had been focusing the nation's attention on the great possibilities for a cotton textile industry, ever since Samuel Slater had set up the nation's first spinning mill in Rhode Island in 1790. The total amount of cotton grown in the United States in that year would not keep the looms of the present Bates Manufacturing Company running for two weeks. But there were other things happening. Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin in 1793, the War of 1812 cut off this country's ability to export and import cloth, and the first power loom went into production in a Massachusetts mill in 1814. But even then 98% of the cloth made...
in America was made in the home by the family for its own use.

With cotton production booming and with the power loom an accomplished fact, the nation was ready to build its cotton textile industry. New England had the water power and the climate. New England had the mechanical geniuses necessary to build factories. New England was the birthplace of the industry.

By the time Benjamin Bates arrived in Lewiston, in the company of Massachusetts Congressman Alexander Dewitt, mills were dotting the rivers of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The Saco, Kennebec, and Androscoggin Rivers in Maine were each supplying the power for at least one cotton mill, although operations along the Androscoggin were of minor importance.

Bates, thirty-nine, a former school teacher and cash boy in a Boston store, now a member of the respected Boston firm of Davis, Bates, and Turner, noted the natural fall of 50 feet in the Androscoggin River. His thoughts were not of the beauty of the falls, however, but of cotton weaving. He saw that a canal would be needed to harness the power efficiently, and he visualized not one mill, but a line of mills placed along its banks. The sleepy farming community of Lewiston was met its builder.

Back in Boston he painted such a glowing picture that half a million dollars was soon raised to build a cotton mill. When it came to raising additional funds to build the needed canal, Bates ran into difficulty. He arranged a banquet in Lewiston, to which were invited industrialists from Lowell and Lawrence. It was not a resounding success, for they returned to Massachusetts only to ridicule his ideas. Besides, there was another question. Wouldn’t the development of a textile industry in Maine become a threat to their own interests along the Merrimac River in Massachusetts?

Bates struck out on his own, securing and advancing large sums on his personal credit. In 1850 the canal was started and on August 16th John Hubbard, Governor of Maine, affixed his signature to the act incorporating the Bates Manufacturing Company.

Things began to happen fast. The mill building was completed and machinery began to arrive over the new railroad that had come to Lewiston the year before. The first 200 operatives were hired. The first monthly payroll of $3,900 was met... and by the end of its first year of operation Bates had sold the magnificent total of $19,308.81 worth of goods, forty minutes of sales activity for the present Company. Today’s Bates Division was under way.

Even before the birth of the textile industry in Lewiston there had been activity in Saco and Augusta. The products of this activity are the present York and Edwards Divisions of the Bates Manufacturing Company. These plants were to grow for a century and more on their own before becoming a part of the present Company.

York was the first. It was in 1831, the year of the first successful American steam locomotive, that the York Manufacturing Company purchased the present mill site of the York Division on an island in the middle of the Saco River. Construction was begun immediately, and by the year 1832 looms were making sheeting and twilled goods under plant manager Samuel Batchelder, who founded the Pepperell Manufacturing Company twelve years later. For the first twenty years
of growth, during which period four more mills were built by York to make denims, jeans, shirting stripes and fancy and colored goods, all of the fabrics woven were shipped out by boat, there being no railroads in Maine until 1842. Company books in 1838 show half-ownership of a schooner which made the Saco-Boston run carrying York goods to market.

Early in its career York had a high reputation throughout this country and abroad for fine colored cotton fabrics. Today, over a century later, York's woven plaids and chambrays are in demand by America's leading dressmakers and department stores.

Augusta's first textile development was located there to take advantage of the rushing Kennebec River. The power and force of the stream were factors to be reckoned with. Early industrial records of the city show corporation after corporation ruined because of disastrous floods and attendant fires caused by the unruly river.

In 1845 the Kennebec Dam Company, later named the Augusta Water Power Company, built six saw mills, a grist mill, and a 10,000 spindle cotton mill, Augusta's first. This mill, after many changes in structure and ownership, was to become the Edwards Division of the Bates Manufacturing Company in 1945, one hundred years later.

The ten years following 1850 saw Lewiston the center of most of Maine's textile progress. It kept the editor of the Lewiston Falls Journal hopping, reporting that "Never since we have been a citizen of this place has there been a time of more general prosperity in every branch of business." At the Bates plant he could report the building of a second mill, doubling the capacity of the original Company, "with new machinery being started up as fast as help can be obtained." By 1857 he could say, "The Bates Mill is one of the largest and most admirably fitted in New England. It runs 36,000 spindles, employing 1,000 hands, turning out 5,700,000 yards of the best quality of cotton goods of the best texture and most beautiful style." He also added a bitter pill for Bates' dinner guests of a few years before to swallow by noting, "Lowell and Lawrence cannot equal it." Bates was already winning prizes at Maine and Massachusetts fairs for "best pantaloons" and "best plain and fancy cotton fabrics," but he wanted a more diversified operation for his machines. Accordingly, in 1858 he wove the first Bates bedspread. Ninety-two years later Bates is the world's largest producer of woven bedspreads. The present product is the result of 92 years of production, research and "know-how."

In 1854 Bates' plan to line the banks of the Androscoggin Canal with textile machinery went into its second phase with the erection of the first building of the present Hill Division. By 1860 this plant was employing 400 hands and running 22,400
spindles. The labor needs of this plant and of the two Bates plants were too much for the town of Lewiston either to supply or to house. Workers from all parts of the state, attracted by the cash wages which, low as they seem now, were considerably higher than they could expect to earn by work in the farm communities or by going into teaching, migrated to Lewiston. The Company erected one block of six tenements to help reduce the acute housing shortage and gave 50 cents a week towards the cost of board and room of the occupants. Girl weavers averaged $1.39 for a 71½ hour week and paid $1.25 to $1.50 per week for board and room. Male spinners averaged $7.62 and overseers $15.00.

If wages seem low in relation to those paid today, there was a solid economic reason for it. The yardage produced by each operative was appallingly low. The automatic loom was still thirty-five years in the future, and the standard work load per weaver on plain looms was but four machines. In 1857 the average Bates employee produced in an hour goods that had a total sales value of only 17 cents, of which about 7 cents went to pay for the cotton used. The average hourly wage was about 6.4 cents. Today in one hour the average Bates employee produces many times as much cloth and earns $1.184.

The industry in these early years also suffered some of the economic ups and downs that have plagued it all during its life in this country. The dumping of vast quantities of British goods on the market shook American production more than once during the decade, causing some unemployment and a depression in stock values. The Lewiston paper commented that this fall in manufacturing stocks "is undoubtedly caused by want of confidence in the future condition of manufacturing in this country."

Bates' confidence in the future of his Maine textile operations never wavered. He went on with preparations to double the size of the young Hill Manufacturing Company and scanned plans for the construction of the Androscoggin Mills, third in his line of plants along the canal. Erected at a cost of $700,000, the 40,000 spindle Androscoggin plant was the biggest single construction job undertaken in Lewiston up until that time.

Meanwhile, in Augusta, the future Edwards Division was going through trying times. In 1859 a flood severely damaged the Augusta Water Power Company, which had already seen a fire and flood ruin its textile properties earlier in the decade. In 1860 its new owner was trying valiantly to put it on its feet.

The York Manufacturing Company was already a relatively large producer during this decade, turning out 5,350,000 yards of cotton fabrics a year by 1853. This same year saw the last of the great whale oil lamps extinguished with the introduction of gas lighting in the plant.

Lighting the gas lamps was a daily occurrence.
All five of the present Bates plants were available to meet the great demands of the Civil War. While many New England mills, thinking the war would be over in ninety days, were selling their stocks of cotton, Benjamin Bates was buying. This enabled Maine plants to run during many a week when Massachusetts mills were closed down for lack of cotton, which went as high as $1.90 a pound. Their most important war fabric was duck for tenting. Reports from Bates’ office in Boston indicated that Bates duck was preferred above all others by the Army Quartermaster. The reeds were tremendous, and every available Bates loom, as well as the new machines being installed at Androscoggin, was thrown on duck production to meet the demands. Meanwhile plans for the construction of Hill #2, identical in design to the first building, were completed and production started in 1862. The addition of this equipment more than doubled the pre-war size of this plant. The war called on its looms for capacity operation. Only the shrinking cotton supply limited its output of sheetings, jeuns, shirting, and twills.

By the close of the war all present Bates plants, with the exception of the flood-behaved Edwards, were running smoothly and turning out an increasing variety of fabrics. The Augusta Water Power Company was unable to salvage much from its holdings and in 1867 sold out to the A. W. Sprague Company, which came in with new capital and enlarged the cotton mill to 35,000 spindles. Production began to run moderately well. In Lewiston, the Androscoggin was making jeans, twills, sheetings, fine goods, duck, and seamless bags, its first product. Their fame was widespread. By 1870 they were turning out 1,600,000 bags a year, as well as 6,000,000 yards of fabrics. Capacity was up to 50,000 spindles and 1100 hands were at work.

The Bates plant had been steadily expanding, both in number of products and number of machines. A small woolen mill had been built, producing Moscow beavers and fancy cassimeres which were held in high regard. Seersucker production had been added, as well as gingham, a fabric that had previously been made almost exclusively in England.
An interesting cost comparison with modern times is afforded by a bill from the Crompton and Knowles loom works for 4 x 4 non-automatic box looms to produce gingham, listing the price at $165.00 each. When the York Division re-entered woven plaid production in 1947, automatic box looms purchased from the same company cost $1,814.00 each.

York had headed into the production of fine goods early in its career, even as today, although other heavier fabrics were woven to balance production. Hundreds of plaid patterns, twills, fancy checks, shirting stripes, fancy and heavy cassaneres, towels, hatting, twills, ganbroens, denims, and jeans were only a few of the many fabrics introduced by York during this and succeeding decades. However, a local historian was not impressed by this plant that was turning out over half a million yards a month. In a letter to the agent of the mill concerning the history of the plant site he commented, "On August 18, 1860, the Hon. Stephen A. Douglas delivered an oration on the lot now occupied by your storehouse. This seems to have been the only approach to real fame which the immediate vicinity ever attained."

Although this decade was marked by the severe postwar depression of 1873-1875, four of the five present Bates plants improved their position and expanded. It was also at this time that the great immigration of French-Canadian men and women reached its peak. Today the vast majority of Bates employees are of French extraction and still speak their mother tongue fluently.

York saw its first million-dollar sales year and built a new 300-loom mill on the strength of its improving business. Edwards, still dogged by its chain of misfortunes, lost 160 feet of its dam the second month of the new decade. A new and sturdier dam, which still stands today, was built immediately.

Construction of present dam at Edwards Division, 1870.

Informations: Electric welding, telephone, incandescent lamp. 1871 Chicago fire destroys 18,000 buildings. 1876 General George Custer's last stand. Wild Bill Hickok killed.
At the Bates Division in Lewiston the first Marseilles quilt woven in this country was produced in 1871. The Company's first damasks went on Bates looms in 1877. The diversity of production and the number of new fabrics and methods introduced at this plant were a continued source of amazement to the townspeople. The Lewiston paper reported that "800 different styles are made by the Bates Corporation, of which an average of 400 are constantly on the looms." Sailed out for special comment were Mr. Harris, the designer, who "habitually exercises his ingenuity and taste in developing new styles" at the rate of 100 a year, and Mr. Barker, the mill agent, whose invention of a machine "whereby the yarn is printed by machinery instead of by hand in a style and accuracy nowhere else equaled" made Bates ginghams an international success.

Other fabrics woven at Bates included such varied items as shoe cloth, toweling, cheviots, piques, lap robes, tape, horse covers, corset cloth, cotton blankets, checked table cloths, curtain cloths, hammock cloths, awning cloths, seersuckers, shirtings, napkins, crochet quilts, and diapers. By 1880 Bates was making over ten million yards of cotton cloths a year, the woolen venture having been abandoned after a fire destroyed most of that part of the plant in 1878.

Hill's rapid expansion took it into the production of shirtings, jeans, suitings, muslin, and twills, as well as sheeting, much of which soon found its way into the lucrative China trade. Hill's famous badge of quality, "Semper Idem" (Always the Same), was a

Colorful labels identifying the many different products of the plants were becoming well known both in this country and abroad. At the United States Centennial Exhibition held in Philadelphia in 1876 their Maine-made fabrics captured a substantial number of awards.
sign of dependability all over the world just as today
the Bates Laboratory Tested tag attached to Bates
products has won recognition as a badge of quality.

The young Androscoggin plant continued to buy
more spindles and increase production. By 1880 the
three Lewiston plants were making 28,000,000 yards
of cotton fabrics annually in addition to 2,300,000
Androscoggin seamless bags. The local paper's com-
ment on the activities of the day is significant. "It
is only by close pursuit of the 19th century that
our Lewiston Mills, having to meet the competition
of the world, are able to wrench their brilliant suc-
cess from the shrewd hands of traffic...The spirit
of progress which inspires our corporations is the
spirit which has made Lewiston what she is today."

Bates lost its leader with the death of Benjamin
E. Bates in 1878, but that "spirit of progress" was
to remain an integral part of the Company's life.

There are four men and women still working for
the Company who can remember the events of
this decade. Napoleon McGraw, of Androscoggin,
Percy Jones and Helene Sirois of Edwards, and
Alfred Guay of the York Division. Mule spinning
was still the order of the day, the automatic loom
was not in existence, and electric power and light
had yet to be introduced into Bates plants. The first
electric lighting, generated by the plants themselves,
began to replace gas lamps in 1886.

About six hours had been chopped off the work
week since the birth of the Company and hourly
wages had climbed about 50%. Individual produc-
tion per hour had increased about 65%, but was
still only about one quarter of today's level. The
industry was on the threshold of its next round
of technological improvements that were to make
possible the improved standard of living of the tex-
tile worker and the finer cloth of today.

Edwards conquered its difficulties after 1882, when
Jacob Edwards took over the defunct Sprague Com-
pany and expanded the plant that today bears his
name. Three stock issues raised $1,200,000, the
money being used to triple the size of the mill. In
ten years Edwards added over 62,000 spindles, rais-
ing its status from the smallest of the future Bates

Conal Street, Lewiston, about 1890. Tenements at left for housing employees have since been sold. Androscoggin plant at end of street, Hill at right.
plants then operating to the largest. Producing cambrics, print cloths and light sheeting on its 28 and 40 inch looms, its sales zoomed to over a million dollars a year.

York boosted its spinning capacity 50% with the addition of 17,000 spindles, raising output to over 12,500,000 yards a year and was bothered only by the growing preference of America's women for print cloths rather than its ginghams. That was not the first or the last of the fashion changes that were to force complete revamping of production in the Maine plants.

At the Bates plant production was largely on four types of fabric—ginghams, seersuckers, damasks, and quilts. These four were to dominate the sales picture of that plant for half a century—quilts, or bedspreads, remaining the largest product of the plant to this day. Quality experiments on the famed Bates Turkey Red Damask showed methods far less scientific than today. The manager of the Bates plant was told by letter from the Boston office of the treasurer to test the color of the new fabrics and to “wash, iron, and dry them in the sun every day for a week at home. Wash them as your wife would wash a tablecloth; but do it every day.”

Today, using scientific instruments, our laboratory applies a total of 55 different routine tests to control the quality of our fabrics at every stage of manufacture, a far cry from the plant manager’s washtub.

Hill and Androscoggin, as well as Bates, operated prosperously throughout the ten year period, causing the local paper to exclaim somewhat overenthusiastically “Shakespeare’s Puck must have had our local mills in mind when he proposed to put a girdle around the earth in a remarkably short time.”
A wave of technological changes affected every phase of Bates operations during the period prior to World War I. Electric power to run plant machinery came in at the close of the century, as did the new automatic looms. Machine power was more and more replacing human muscle in man's battle for abundance. The canal, which had been described thirty years before as an "inexhaustible source of power," had to be widened in 1904 to keep the Bates, Hill, and Androscoggin machinery in action.

During this time the work week was again cut six hours, a typical plant operation being a one-shift 60-hour week. As the industry became more and more mechanized the proportion of jobs held by men increased, a trend halted temporarily by the re-entry of many women into the field during the two world wars to follow. In 1890 men held only 35% of the jobs in the plants. Today they hold 56%, and the trend is still continuing as complex machinery being introduced demands more and more mechanical ability and less and less finger dexterity.

Edwards ran its expanded plant at a steady level, turning in annual sales in the neighborhood of a million dollars during the entire twenty years. Profits were steady, but moderate. York continued to enlarge its facilities for production of colored goods, being one of the dominant mills in the country on this type of fabric. Large sums were spent on new box looms, finishing, and dyeing equipment. Heavy demand for gingham and chambrays pushed production to over 41,000,000 yards a year. Androscoggin and Hill operated steadily, modernizing and expanding to keep abreast of the dynamic progress of the industry, while Bates built new weave sheds for jacquard looms in 1892, a quilt finishing room in 1895, and a new storehouse in 1902. By 1907 the Bates plant consisted of five mills and twenty-two other buildings, with 2000 employees turning over 13,000 bales of cotton into millions of yards of gingham, damasks, and bedspreads yearly.
The first fifteen years of this period saw the cotton textile industry go through its greatest period of expansion. In every twenty-year period since 1840 the number of spindles in American plants had doubled. Between 1900 and 1925, 19,000,000 spindles were added to existing capacity, doubling it again. This, plus the newly adopted practice of night and day operation, resulted in an overproduction problem for the industry.

Faced by competition with low southern labor costs and the introduction of fabrics made from synthetic yarns, New England's cotton plants were hard hit. By 1930, 5,000,000 spindles had been scrapped in New England, with another 9,000,000 destined to go in the ensuing years. One hundred mills went out of business in Massachusetts alone. The entire industry operated at a net loss of $86,000,000 during the period 1924-1930 and was to lose another $32,000,000 in the decade following 1930.

The shadow of southern competition which had fallen like a blight upon cities in other sections of New England began to fall on Maine and the five plants that make up the present Company. By 1928 several of the plants were considering liquidation. Androscooggin's stockholders had voted to close. Drastic action was needed to keep the plants in operation.

Walter S. Wyman, president of the Central Maine Power Company and long one of Maine's stalwarts, accurately sensed and analyzed the situation. He foresaw the disaster which would befall the area if the textile plants closed and made vigorous efforts to interest local capital in a plan to save the Androscooggin Mill. When this failed, the Central Maine Power Company agreed to furnish a small amount of capital. In 1929 Mr. Wyman participated in the organization of the New England Industries, Inc., which ultimately acquired control of the five plants which now comprise the operating units of the Bates Manufacturing Company.

New England Industries, Inc., financed by New England Public Service Company, carried the plants through the depression, furnishing the necessary financial life-blood. The struggle to retain this substantial industry for the State of Maine was won due to the vigorous leadership of Mr. Wyman, and the Company stands today as a real monument to his faith in Maine. Mr. Wyman's contribution is well summarized by the following quotation from a speech made in 1949 by William B. Skelton, Esquire, who succeeded Mr. Wyman as President of the Power Company.

"This movement to save the five mills, the three already mentioned, the Edwards in Augusta and the York in Saco, was a complete success. All were operated continuously throughout the Depression and were prepared to share in the period of prosperity which followed. Without the initiative of Wyman when the Androscooggin was about to liquidate in 1928 and the support he was able to get from his associates, there is no doubt that four of them, probably all five, would have gone out of existence by the early 1930's. With it, all were saved, continuous employment was furnished, payrolls were distributed. Instead of dismantled buildings rotting away, their combined payroll in the last fiscal year was over $20.5 million. And they are physically equipped to meet competition anywhere."
goods such as shoe lining fabrics. The Edwards and Androscoggin moves brought wide diversification to the production of the Maine mills.

York, which had seen the market for colored goods disappear once more following World War I, switched over to fine plain goods such as voiles and lawns, which are still in production at that plant today. Hill, installing 774 of the new Draper automatic looms in 1915, continued production of its famed Semper Idem muslins, as well as jeans and suitings, while Bates bought more new looms to widen its line of bedspreads, which now included all-cotton jacquard weaves, as well as crochet, sateen, brocade, damask, Ripettle, and cotton-rayon blend spreads. The trade names “Betty Bates” and “Priscilla Bates” were American household words. Production of its renowned Zephyr gingham and Crown flannels and damask tablecloths rounded out production so well that Bates paid regular dividends all through the twenty-year period.

It was decided that salvation for Androscoggin lay in entering the booming rayon field, which had grown with startling rapidity. In 1910 the first rayon yarn had yet to be produced in America and even in 1920 the entire output of synthetic yarns by American producers would not have been enough to keep the Bates Manufacturing Company’s rayon looms supplied last year. In the nine years before the decision was made to convert Androscoggin, rayon yarn production had increased fifteen times while the price had dropped over seventy per cent.

In 1930, 649 looms were purchased to start the expansion program. The completion was to see Androscoggin become one of the largest rayon cloth producing plants in the world, turning out over four miles of fabric in a single hour.

Edwards, meanwhile, was also revamping its production program, deciding to abandon production of fine goods and concentrate its efforts on coarse fabrics.
early in the operation of the plants by New England Industries an event was happening in New York that was to have a profound effect on their future. In 1930 Herman D. Ruhm, Jr., a young man of 28 who had served his apprenticeship in the department store field, joined Bliss Fabyan to head up its bedspread department. With keen merchandising ability, Ruhm began to gather about him a group of young men who shared his ideas. National advertising began in 1933, and by 1937 he was ready for the next step, the organization of Bates Fabrics, Inc., to sell the bedspreads, table covers and napkins being produced by the Bates plant. Among the new bedspreads his organization was selling was the machine-produced candlewick, invented in 1935 by Henry Goulet of the Bates plant.

As the typical selling house at that time handled a very wide line of fabrics, there was much shaking of heads over the dim future of this company organized to sell such a narrow range of products. Close ties were built with leading wholesale distributors, however, and full color advertising and aggressive merchandising tactics began to show results. By 1938 a branded line of sheets was added. It is typical of the organization that this product was an entirely new construction of bed sheeting, the now famous and widely copied Type 180 comb-percale. Another profitable idea developed by the sales organization in 1940 resulted in the introduction of draperies to match the line of jacquard bedspreads. For a three-year-old, Bates Fabrics was showing plenty of strength.

Meanwhile in Maine many production changes were occurring as the new management attempted to rescue its plants from the doldrums of the nationwide depression. At York, two of the buildings were sold to the Saco-Lowell Shops. The remaining heads over the dim future of this company organized equipment was completely revamped to produce fine combed cotton goods. In Lewiston, both Androscoggin and Hill were putting more and more of their cotton looms on fine combed goods, with the purchase of combers and other needed preparatory equipment being authorized by New England Industries.

The growing importance of synthetics was clearly realized. More looms were added to the growing Androscoggin rayon unit and the Bates Division's
present block of 300 rayon looms was installed in 1934.

Edwards, moving in the opposite direction into coarse goods production, increased its dominance over the shoe lining trade and emerged from the decade with the best profit record of any of the plants.

The work week, which had decreased to 54 and then to 48 hours, fell to 40 with the passage of Federal legislation. This in itself caused no decrease in production, however, as plants ran second and even third shifts to cut overhead costs and secure greater utilization of existing machinery. Individual productivity took its last recent major spurt with the introduction of long draft spinning, the development of the Barber Colman spooler and warper, and installation of the higher speed Draper Model X loom. These enabled real hourly wages to increase over 58% during the decade.
The war years made heavy demands on the productive capacity of the Maine plants. Androscoggin turned out vast quantities of the new nylon parachute cloth, camouflage cloth and rayon uniform linings. Bates, Hill and Edwards were all called on for large amounts of Army duck and herringbone twills. Other products in demand were Edwards rifle patches, sheetings and shoe linings; Hill Navy summer uniform cloth and water-repellent oxford for sleeping bags; Bates sheets and bedspreads for service hospitals; and York wind-resistant poplin for Army field jackets, Navy summer uniform cloth and airplane wing fabric. Production was limited only by the plants' ability to find enough operatives to man the machines.

During these years when Ruhm was building up a selling organization in New York, Robert Braun was emerging as leader of the enterprises in Maine. Born in Norwich, Connecticut, Braun started on his long career at the age of 14 as errand boy for Porteous & Mitchell Company, the local department store. Twenty years later, when the firm decided to open a store in Portland, Maine, he was made general manager of the new outlet. Its name: Porteous, Mitchell & Braun Company, now Maine's largest department store. In 1934, with 48 years of merchandising experience behind him, Braun "retired." Shortly thereafter Walter Wyman called on him for
help with the mills, and he became a director of each of the five plants. Upon Wyman's death in 1942, he was elected president of the textile firms.

Changes on the selling front were also occurring. Bliss Fabyan went out of business in 1938. The five plants proceeded to organize their own sales department to handle sale of all grey goods. Named the Maine Mills, it operated under the leadership of Howard Bishop from its founding in 1940 until his death in 1943. Because of Ruhm's marked success with Bates Fabrics, Inc., Braun chose him to succeed Bishop as head of the Maine Mills department in addition to his duties as President of Bates Fabrics, Inc.

Believing that the future success of the plants depended on a quality line of fabrics well known to the American consumer, Ruhm poured his efforts into building the Bates name. In 1940, the now famed "George Washington's Choice" bedspread was developed by Bates production men. The process involved rediscovery of a weaving art lost for generations. Bates Fabrics backed the launching of this fine product with advertising and sales promotion so successfully that demand has outstripped production ever since the bedspread was introduced. In Maine, an efficient central quality control and research laboratory was founded. But the biggest change for Bates Fabrics, Inc., and for the plants in Maine, came with the decision in 1944 to take the Company into sale of finished cotton and rayon piece goods under the Bates label. In only four years consumer polls showed Bates the best known name in the cotton piece goods field.

The foundation for the present Company was now ready with smoothly operating teams headed by Braun in Maine and Ruhm in New York. When the New England Public Service Company divested itself of its textile interests, the successful bidders for the stock kept Braun and Ruhm in command. The Maine Mills organization merged into Bates Fabrics, Inc. and the 95-year-old Bates Manufacturing Company acquired the physical assets of the Aaroseoggin Mills, The Edwards Manufacturing Company, Hill Manufacturing Company and York Manufacturing Company. On December 15, 1945, the Bates Manufacturing Company, as presently organized, began a new chapter in the life of the Company with Robert Braun as Chairman of the Board and Herman D. Ruhm, Jr. as President.

New sheen fabrics include textured voiles, batistess, lawns, crisp tissue gingham woven with all-combed yarns at York and Hill Divisions.

Wiltshire broadcloth, high-count, combed-yarn product of Hill Division meets tests for top quality and beauty.

Polka-dot and plaid-bordered comb-percale sheets from Bates Division are making news.

"Saratoga" bedspread and matching draperies from Bates Division are part of spring line.
The story today...

Walk around from machine to machine, from office to office. Ask what has happened in the four years since December 15, 1945.

"The new lab...we have 38 people working there now, using the finest equipment in the business. Only one thing we're trying to do...make better Bates fabrics. Did you know we've found ways to treat cotton fabrics that make changes in the internal structure of the fibre...revolutionary! When you go up to Edwards make sure you see the pilot plant...built like a small mill...we can production-test any idea we want."

"Improved working conditions? Let me tell you! Hottest day last summer it was 8 degrees cooler in the weave room than outside. They've put air-conditioning all over the place. Look at this room. Don't see any belts overhead, do you? Lot safer to work here than it used to be."

"Improvements in buildings and new machines? That's no secret. In 1946 we spent $1,000,000, in 1947 $2,220,000, in 1948 $2,798,000 and in 1949 $2,499,000. The major part of our profits went for this purpose each year, to buy new looms, combers, roving frames..."

"The advertising budget? Well, we're spending $900,000 a year now plugging bedspreads and sheets, and cotton, nylon and rayon piece goods. In the first six months of this year we'll have color ads in 23 magazines, reach over 76,000,000 readers, and this doesn't include our trade campaign. This is a promotion-minded company and it..."

"Some machine, isn't it? Came in last week. Before we got this baby you had to pull every one of those threads through there and there and there by hand, and we run over five thousand to just one warp...took 12 hours to make just one warp. The two of us here bat out one an hour now...and do you know what she cost? Over fourteen thousand bucks! Some set of tools for a guy and look here, it..."
When I started work in '46 this was a bare field. You can't see it on account of the snow now, but there are 3 baseball diamonds out there. The people on the rink? That's the hockey team... when they aren't using it nights we have public skating, average about 250 people. Come on in and I'll show you the field house...

Yes, it has been quite a story since then. It's been quite a story for the past 100 years, as a matter of fact. This Company has seen America grow from a farming community of 23,000,000 people in 30 states to the world's most powerful industrial nation with 150,000,000 people in 48 states. It was weaving millions of yards of cloth yearly when words like automobile, telephone, telegraph, electric light and power, rayon, and nylon were unknown. During the life of its five plants, its products have been a cross-section of the nation's fabric demands, and it has seen the southern textile industry grow from an idea to dominance of the industry. During this period the Bates Manufacturing Company has stayed in Maine to become the state's largest manufacturing concern. It has grown. It has prospered.

Throughout the records of the Company runs one characteristic that may well be the key to its survival and the lesson of a century in business. It is the willingness to turn the plant inside out if necessary to give a customer what he wants and an willingness and active desire to meet the changes of the times rather than attempt to resist them, to look on the tomorrows rather than the yesterdays.

This heritage that the Company has received from its founders, the tradition of breaking tradition, has resulted in better and cheaper products for its customers, higher wages and shorter hours for its employees, and better investment opportunities for an increasing number of stockholders.

These are solid accomplishments, more solid than the walls of brick and the rows of machines that form the plants of the Company today. Customers, employees, and stockholders have made possible the creation and continued existence of the Bates Manufacturing Company and will keep Bates in the forefront of the textile industry in the years to come.
Describing one of our products back in 1870, a reporter for the Lewiston Journal had this to say, "These seamless bags find their way into the markets of the world. Last fall, we saw some of them in one of Brigham Young's Zion's Cooperative Stores in Salt Lake City, where, beneath the inscription of 'Holiness to the Lord,' a sleepy-eyed saint dealt out sugar, molasses, tape and Androscoggin Seamless Bags."

We haven't made this product for many years, but we're very much in business with ZCMI, a store which claims the title of America's oldest department store. Last year we sold ZCMI cotton and rayon piece goods, comb-percale sheets and pillowcases, table covers, bedspreads and matching draperies, products made in every one of our five plants.

Bates customers conduct a wide variety of businesses. On these pages we introduce nine of them.
Children's dress manufacturers like sturdy Bates fabrics. Clarence Weilier (left) buys for famous Loomcraft line.

Hotels buy Bates bedspreads, sheets, and pillowcases from distributors. Bill Hubbard of E. E. Alley calls on account.

High-fashion cutters like Henry Rosenfield (right) use many patterns. This Bates plaid dress is advertised nationally.


Men's wear accounts are growing. Ad. Mgr. Carl Leeds, President Harry Doniger sport McGregor sportswear.

Converters purchase big lots of fabric in the grey. Melville R. Croll (right) of Carnac, Inc., is a good customer.

Armed services bought millions of yards from Bates last year. Stanley B. Doernbach represents Army Quartermaster.

Every working day they produce and sell over 500,000 yards of cloth.

Through the years we have had thousands of fine people working with us. We still have. On these pages we present a few of the many hundreds of different jobs they do to keep Bates operating.

We'd like to call particular attention to Percy and Rose Jones of the Edwards Division. In 1950 they celebrate together their 55th wedding anniversary, and a combined total of 121 years of service with the Edwards Division of Bates. Both the Company and the Joneses are pretty proud of their record.

During Percy's time with Bates he has seen production of each weaver rise seven times since he ran his first non-automatic loom back in 1888. His looms were the old Lewiston and Lowell models, and every time the shuttle ran out of filling, the loom stopped. Percy had to fill about 75 shuttles an hour, starting up the looms again each time, in addition to repairing breaks and keeping his set weaving smoothly. Today's looms run 20% more picks, or threads, to the minute on cloth that is 50% wider. The shuttles are kept full automatically, and improved methods all through processing make the work run smoother, so much so that each weaver today handles four times as many of these faster looms as Percy did, and Percy was a very good weaver.

Has this increase in productivity helped Percy, Rose, and their fellow employees? Since the end of mule spinning and the introduction of the automatic loom at the end of the 19th century, a weaver's hourly wage has increased more than thirteen times and a drawing-in hand's hourly wage about fourteen times, while hours of work per week have dropped 39%. America's ever-increasing production efficiencies are shared by all.

Percy and Rose Jones, Augusta home-owners, popular in plant and community, enjoy spending time together.
Salesman Chris Christensen, with Bates Fabrics, Inc., since 1937, works from St. Louis office.

Designer Ann Shepardson of Bates Fabrics, Inc., creates sketches that will be tomorrow's fabrics.

Engineer Fritz Newton tackles construction jobs ranging from water wheels to oil-fired boilers.

Cloth inspector Germaine A. Berube of Androscoggin Division checks rayons and nylon for flaws.

Comber tender Pauline Moreau of Hill. Her new machines keep inferior fibres out of Bates cloth.

Foreman Roland Rousselle supervises quality-conscious spinning department at York Division.

Shuttle man Napoleon McGraw has behind him sixty-seven years of service with Androscoggin.

Research chemist Malcolm Jewell is part of a team developing new fabrics and finishes.

Billing clerk Patricia Burgault of Bates Division invoices fabrics to customers all over America.
STOCKHOLDERS

6255 men and women in 46 states own our Company.

The willingness of our common and preferred stockholders to invest their savings in Bates has made possible the very existence of this Company. Beyond their common interest in Bates, it would be difficult to find any similarity among them. Living in 46 states, they are salesmen, stenographers, executives, laborers, shopkeepers, students, hairdressers, mechanics, and housewives, to name only a few. To list them all would more than fill this entire book.

On this page, we introduce six. The Company owes a debt of gratitude to them and their 6249 fellows who have so clearly evidenced their faith in Bates.

Textile man William Napier, Jr., Chicago, salesman for nylon company, owns cotton yarn brokerage house.


Merchant Warren S. Shaw, Lewiston, Maine, owns photo supply store, bought Bates common stock as investment.

Librarian Mabel Eaton works for Lewiston's Bates College, named for founder of Bates Manufacturing Company.

Pharmacist Dr. Hugh S. Waller, Atlanta, Georgia. Mrs. Waller likes to sew Bates outfits for her four daughters.

Cloth inspector Clarisse L. DeBlois, Lewiston, Maine, has worked at the Hill Division of Bates for three years.