

The Wood Flong Corporation

The oldest and largest manufacturer in the world of flongs, also known as newspaper mats, was in Hoosick Falls. A flong was a specially designed wood fiber board used mainly by daily newspapers as a mold to transfer the type and picture images from metal or plastic type to a printing plate for the presses. The Wood Flong Corporation was located in Clay Hill in the Malleable Iron Works plant of the old Walter A. Wood Company. The plant covered 13 acres and had 125,000 square feet of space devoted to production and another 3,300 square feet of space for offices. The company employed over 200 people, with sales representatives all over the United States.

The company was founded by Benjamin Wood in 1911. Wood was the fourteenth of 15 children of a one-time mayor of New York City. He was no relation to Walter A. Wood. The company began as an importer of stereotype flongs, or newspaper mats as they are called in the U.S. By 1915, the company had perfected a domestic manufacturing process. Increased sales created a need for more space. The plant was moved from Stillwater, NY to Hoosick Falls in 1929.

Wood Flong was the first mat maker to produce the one-piece packless mat. Over 124 newspapers purchased this better mat. The *New York News* used over 150,000 mats per year. With a million-dollar expansion, the company could produce 50,000 mats per day. The mats were exported to over 45 foreign countries.

The company remained in the Benjamin Wood family until 1946, when it was sold to an outside group. In 1966, Moore-McCormack Company purchased Wood Flong and sold it in 1969 to Bolt, Beranek and Newman. In 1973, it was sold again to a group of employees headed by Calvin Otto and included Ralph Millington and Charles Cappellino.

With the advent of new technology in printing, the need for mats slowly disappeared. Wood Flong worked hard to produce new products and worked with Lydall Company to produce gasket material, electric board, engraving material, and other products. Lydall purchased Wood Flong in January, 1980 and continued operations.