



HISTORY

LONG before Ecusta came to Pisgah Forest, man had made use of the crystal-clear water of the Davidson River in various ways. From the time the first Indians roamed the forests of Eastern America, the river has been a means of existence, recreation, and employment for thousands of people. The Indians, calling the river "Ecusta" (rippling waters), depended on it for the major portion of their food supply—trout from the stream and bear and deer from the dense forests near by.

When pioneers began their westward trek, they were amazed at the beauty and invitingness of the Davidson River Valley, and many were so impressed that they decided to make their homes on the banks of the rippling waters. They cleared the ground, built their homes, and planted seed. Soon after the first harvest they realized the need of some way to grind their grain into meal and flour, resulting in the first industrial use of the water of the Davidson. A grist mill was built.

This was the only industrial use until, during the War Between the States, the water was harnessed to furnish power to manufacture implements of war. The Big Hammer was brought from Charleston, S. C., placed on the banks of the stream, and gun barrels for the Confederate Army were forged from manganese, mined on Little Mountain.

This region was too rough and too far from market to tempt the lumbermen until, in the closing years of the nineteenth century, railroads began to penetrate the mountains. In the years that followed, logging roads pierced deep into the forests, great sawmills sprang up, and cutting of timber went on at a fast pace. This was another industry on the banks of the now famous stream, and was the major source of income for this section for many years.

In 1937, Mr. Harry H. Straus, who had been an importer of French cigarette paper, selected the Davidson over many proposed sights for the location of his plant, which was to manufacture cigarette paper from a hitherto unknown raw material for this highly complex product. Pure water