

= Parsley Peel =

Robert Peel ( 1723 ? 12 September 1795 ) , commonly known as Parsley Peel , was an influential cotton mill owner and grandfather to Sir Robert Peel , 2nd Baronet , future prime minister of Great Britain . Peel started life as a yeoman farmer but experimented with calico printing , eventually creating a parsley leaf pattern which would become his trademark . Despite losing a number of machines during riots , Peel 's company became the largest in the textile sector by the time of his death , with 23 factories .

= = Early life = =

Robert Peele was born in 1723 at Peele Fold in Oswaldtwistle to William Peele and Jane Anne Peele . His family were traditionally yeoman farmers , until his grandfather Robert Peele abandoned the trade in favour of making woollen cloth . Parsley 's father , William , attempted to return the family to farming and after his education at Blackburn Grammar School , he initially joined his father in this pursuit . He inherited the woodblocks his grandfather used for printing on wool and started experimenting with them . When his wife 's brother , William Haworth , returned from an apprenticeship to a calico @-@ printer in London , the pair attempted to set up a business in calico printing . They received financial backing from William Yates , the landlord of the local public house and formed Haworth , Peel and Yates in 1750 , consisting of a factory in Blackburn and a warehouse in Manchester . By this point , Peel had dropped the final ' e ' from his surname , his reason being that " it was of no use , as it did not add to the sound " .

= = Calico printing = =

Peel had gained a reputation for trying new methods within the industry , being one of the first textile manufacturers to use carding cylinders . He began experimenting at his home with different forms of printing until , according to family tradition , his young daughter Anne brought him a sprig of parsley and begged him to use it as a pattern . He etched this design onto a pewter plate to allow the printing , which was then finished with an iron by one of the women of the household . There are other versions of the tale , which dispute whether the experiments happened at the farm at Peel Fold or his house in Fish Lane and suggest a poor neighbour , Mrs. Milton , calendered the cloth to finish it .

The exact nature of the discovery made by Peel is unclear . It is likely that it was a new method for using the acetate of lead as a dye @-@ fixer ( mordant ) . Another possibility is the use of metal engraving rather than wooden blocks to create the pattern . However it came to be , the pattern was named " Nancy 's pattern " after Peel 's daughter and was very popular ? leading to Robert Peel 's nickname of " Parsley Peel " . The company went on to be one of the first calico printers in Lancashire .

= = Cotton manufacture = =

Peel worked with one of his weavers , James Hargreaves , to investigate new technologies . In 1762 , Peel and Hargreaves set up a carding machine , but decided against using it . When Hargreaves went on to invent the spinning jenny in 1764 , Peel was keen to use the technology . He set them up in his factory at Stanhill where Hargreaves worked . In the spring of 1768 , the spinning jennies at Peel 's factory were blamed for job losses . The factories and Hargreaves ' nearby house were the targets of a riot , destroying the spinning jennies within ? along with some of Peel 's own inventions . In reaction , Peel moved his manufacturing away from Lancashire . He decided on Burton @-@ upon @-@ Trent where he built three mills , including cutting a canal for one .

In 1779 , Peel 's mill in Altham was caught in series of riots against machinery , specifically the carding machines and spinning jenny . Peel came to see the destruction as fortuitous , as he then turned to Richard Arkwright 's carding " engine " . By 1795 , Peel 's family run company , Peel & Co .

, was the largest in the cotton industry with twenty @-@ three mills around the north west of England , fourteen more than their closest competitor .

= = Personal life = =

Peel was described as " a tall robust man " with reddish hair , cautious but shrewd , who led the family to fortune through perseverance and resolve . He married Elizabeth Haworth on 28 August 1744 and they had eight children , including Sir Robert Peel , 1st Baronet . Sir Robert Peel went on to father Sir Robert Peel , 2nd Baronet , the future Prime Minister of the United Kingdom , who helped to create the modern concept of a police force . Young Robert would visit Parsley Peel and his wife at their home in Ardwick . Douglas Hurd noted that Parsley Peel was satisfied with his lot and did not expect to rise up the social ladder personally , though he hoped his children would .

John Wesley said of him , " I was invited to breakfast at Bury by Mr Peel , a calico printer who a few years ago began with £ 500 and is now supposed to have gained £ 20 @,@ 000 . Oh , what a miracle if he lose not his own soul . " In 1794 , Parsley Peel obtained the grant of a coat of arms , including a shuttle held by a lion , a bee signifying business and a new family motto Industria .

Towards the end of his life , Peel started to lean heavily on a cane with a golden head . He lived out his final days in Ardwick Green , near his daughter . Peel died on 12 September 1795 , and was buried in St John 's Church , Manchester . His wife survived him by six months ; one of her final wishes was to outlive her husband . He left his estate split equally between his eight children , valued at £ 13 @,@ 000 each ( worth about £ 1 @.@ 1 million in 2013 ) .