

TANNERIES. — Richard Cummings was the first person who tanned hides. He abandoned the business after a few years, and the people traded for leather at Warren. In 1826, there were three tanneries; one owned by Joseph Beckett, south-south-west of the Methodist Meeting-house; another by Susman Abrams, a Jew,¹ a few rods below the Middle Bridge; and another on the east side of the St. George's above the Upper Bridge. In 1840, there were four in town.

POTASH. — Soon after the incorporation of the town, Edward Jones made potash, in small quantities, near the Lower Bridge. For several years in the early part of the nineteenth century, Ebenezer Alden manufactured five or six tons annually in a building which he erected for the purpose, on a rivulet at the brow of the hill east of Seven Brook, on the south side of the road.

¹ Susman Abrams was from Hamburg. In early life he travelled as a pedler, and traded in old clothes. To save expense, he lived on bread and butter, carrying his butter with him in a covered pewter porringer. It is supposed he fled for some misdemeanor, embarked on board a vessel, and was concerned in the sinking of it. After a residence in Waldoborough, and subsequently in Thomaston, he came to Union. Here he carried on the business of coopering and tanning. He was never very successful in the accumulation of property. His accounts were always kept in the Hebrew characters, and were read from the right to the left. Not being able, as he said, to translate from the Hebrew into our language, he first translated into the German, and then from the German into the English. He was very observant of his written or printed prayers; but in his conduct there was much of the inconsistency which was laid to the charge of the Jews by our Saviour. On one occasion a Jew came to keep the Passover with him. The iron vessels, before being used, were heated red hot, that no leaven might by any possibility remain attached to them. Being very fond of eels, Abrams allowed his appetite to get the better of his religious scruples, and ate a hearty meal, to the great horror of his brother Jew, from whom he received a very severe rebuke for the unrighteous deed. Although he professed faith in Judaism only, and not in Christianity, he was a constant attendant on public worship. On Saturday, which is the Jewish sabbath, he abstained from hard labor, but took occasion to ride about and transact business. Not recognizing any obligation to keep sacredly the first day of the week, he often worked in secret at his tan-yard, and once fell into a vat and was nearly drowned. He was never much liked by the men, and was generally hated by the women. Nov. 29, 1810, he was married to the widow Mary Jones, of Friendship. He died, without issue, Oct. 6, 1830; aged, it is supposed, about eighty-seven years.