The Yorklyn "Tape Mill" (Lower Snuff Mill), 1845–1964: Some lesser-known businesses in Yorklyn existed in the 20th century. I must confess that I don't know much about some of them. But Yorklyn was a milltown, and it seems logical that entrepreneurs would spawn small business ventures from this community.

When the Snuff empire was being downsized a few years after 1900, the Lower Snuff Mill, which had been built about 1845 a half mile downstream from the main mills, was sold to a blind man named Crowell who established the Crowell Corporation to manufacture paper tape. Crowell built a frame home on the hill above the mill, and although he was driven to his office in the mill every day, he was seldom seen or known around Yorklyn. Known locally as the "tape mill," it employed probably 40 people but was sandwiched in a very restricted location between Route 82, the railroad, and Red Clay Creek. Crowell died in the mid-1950s, but the mill continued to operate under new ownership until the disastrous fire of December 1964 completely destroyed the buildings and threatened the railroad trestle nearby. Never rebuilt, the site was cleaned up, and company operations were moved to Newport, Delaware.

The West Chester, Kennett, and Wilmington Electric Railway Company was built in 1903 and passed through the communities of Yorklyn and Hockessin along its circuitous route. Very successful at first, in 1922 the trolley line fell on hard times and closed down as the local roads were improving and automobiles were taking over. Samuel E. Cooper of Yorklyn, a bachelor entrepreneur, National Fibre employee, and storekeeper, and some partners bought the trolley line and opened it again. Unfortunately, their timing was wrong and the line soon closed for good in May, 1923. The rails and electric wires were removed right away, but portions of the rail-bed can still be seen in the winter months. Many years later in 1946, Samuel Cooper Gregg, named for the original Sam Cooper, began the Gregg Bus Company with the purchase of Chick Edler's one school bus. Expanding to many school buses, "Coop" Gregg and his wife Mary started their charter coach business that was operated for nearly 50 years from their Yorklyn Road location, before being purchased by the Krapf Bus Company of West Chester.

T. Clarence Marshall was an agent for Stanley steam cars, operating from Auburn Heights, from 1910 until 1920. The M & M Chemical Company attempted to make certain polishes and other chemical products from a laboratory in the fibre mill in World War I days. The "M's" were Marshall and McClellan, Marshall being my father, and McClellan being "Doc" McClellan, a chemist employed by National Fibre. Then there was the Delaware Scotch Snuff Company that never did much to my knowledge. It's possible that this was controlled by the Marshalls to buy 10 acres of former Snuff Mill property and one large building on the east side of Red Clay Creek near the mills (about 1912).

When the Helme Company closed the Yorklyn snuff mills in 1954, the property and the mill buildings were sold to the Worth Brothers of Wilmington, who had recently sold their Worth Steel Company of Claymont. The 3 brothers moved their offices to Yorklyn and renovated the old Club House building for that purpose, spawning several business ventures. One was the Yorklyn Mushroom Company that utilized many of the old snuff mill buildings for the growing of mushrooms, tying in nicely with their Kennett Canning Company of Kennett Square. Another was inventor Armand Spitz's planetarium business known as Spitz Laboratories. A domed building, constructed for the testing of small planetariums, was built on the snuff mill grounds. A third was Spatz Chemicals, whose poor housekeeping allowed a spontaneous combustion fire to destroy one of the large buildings. Finally, about 1980 the entire property was bought by Daniel C. Lickle, who improved and leased several of the buildings to various businesses until the devastating floods of 1999 and 2003 eliminated their practical use.