

# 2021 Journal

of the Greenbrier Historical Society



Volume X No. 5

Edited by Dr. W. Stephen McBride  
Layout and Design by Brent R. Murrill, Sr.  
Cover Photo of the “Road to Plenty” Exhibit at the  
North House Museum

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Journal  
Of the  
Greenbrier Historical  
Society

VOLUME X NUMBER 5 2021



*Unlocking Our Past. Securing Our Future.*

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# Letter from the Editor

This year's journal is focused on businesses in the Greenbrier Valley. These articles cover a variety of business types; general and specific mercantile establishments (in Lewisburg, Ronceverte, Cass, and Red Sulphur Springs), a restaurant, a spring resort, and two farms. The article on merchant tokens also introduces the reader to construction companies, a limestone company, pharmacies, pool halls, lumber companies, and a sulphur water company. The authors present a variety of perspectives in these articles— some give detailed accounts of the business operation, some are more biographical on the business owners and employees, some are more of a community study, and some combine all three. The articles by Brown and Smith focus on African American and European and Middle Eastern immigrant businesses, respectively. One (Ogden's) focuses on the impacts of rural medical care in the context of an agricultural economy. McMichael's article on Martin and Jones Hardware is unique in that it focuses on the store building itself and how it has evolved and both shaped and been shaped by the people who have encountered it. The token article is also a bit different in that it focuses on a past artifact, one that informs us on businesses of the past, but also on a bygone way of doing business. I hope you enjoy these articles!

**Dr. W. Stephen McBride**

# Letter from the Executive Director

It is a pleasure and a privilege to address you as your new executive director. As a life-long lover of history, it is a gift to get to come to work every day and discover new ways of telling our rich and diverse history. As historians we are both scientists and artists. As scientists, it is our job to be on the constant search for truth and the evolution of discovery. As artists, it is our job to continue to find creative ways of presenting those truths to our community. It is a true badge of honor that an organization of our size can produce a journal of this quality and scholarship. I think we do a great job here, but that work is only possible because of the generous spirit of you, our friends. I look forward to meeting you soon. Please drop by the museum to say hello. But, stick around and take a tour. You're sure to find something new that will capture your imagination!

**Brent R. Murrill, Sr.**



# Letter From the President

Earlier this year, a statement I happened to read in a magazine article captured my attention. It read “Do not ignore the pain that 2020 gave; embrace it, use it, and give it purpose.” Certainly, over the last 18 months this phrase has taken shape in the lives of many, and in many ways. Life has been challenged and changed in ways never experienced in our lifetime. And not just for individuals. The health industry, corporations, learning institutions, and yes, even museums and cultural institutions have had to embrace change brought on by the pandemic and reinvent how to operate effectively and engage with customers, staffs and supporting communities.

The Greenbrier Historical Society and Archives staff and leadership faced this challenge, and did not hesitate to embrace it and creatively give it purpose. Through focused and passionate efforts, steps were taken to develop and implement creative techniques to continue to meet our mission to educate and engage the Greenbrier County community in local and regional history. And why not! History over time is made up of change and challenges, and sometimes not too positive. Through creative online marketing techniques, virtual exhibits, online education programs and ongoing series, downtown walking tours, an open outdoor carriage house, and the official opening of the new 1850’s Tavern conducted using an indoor/outdoor home tour, GHS provided visitors a unique historic experience. In addition, in 2021 we were especially delighted to have provided a beautiful facelift to the exterior and grounds of the North House Museum bringing more attention to the beauty of this historic building and the invaluable treasures inside.

We look forward to 2022, and the recent onboarding of our new Executive Director, with goals to continue to provide creative learning experiences for the community inside the museum as well as virtually. We anticipate additional collaboration with local businesses, schools, and state higher learning institutions in order to build exposure and ability to showcase the history of the Greenbrier Valley. And let me take this time to extend an invitation to you, our membership, to get involved with our efforts at the North House and Archives as volunteers. Your passion for history and unique ideas and skills will be greatly appreciated to support day to day operations and special committee membership. In addition, 2022 will bring special work for GHS at the Barracks, and Blue Sulphur Springs as well as the expansion of the archives and library.

We greatly thank you, GHS members, for your ongoing support and efforts to help continue our growth and ability to educate our community about its rich history. As President, I am honored to be in a position to lead us during this challenging time pressing forward with creativity, focused learning and educational opportunities.

**Janice Cooley, President**  
**Greenbrier Historical Society**



# Fresh Oysters!: Nancy and James Callender's Restaurant

By Stephen Allten Brown

## Fresh Oysters!

**D**URING the present season, from this time forward, I will furnish the citizens of Lewisburg and its vicinity, regularly, with *Fresh Oysters*, either by the gallon, half gallon, quart, pint, or half-pint, or by the plate.—**TERMS**.—By the gallon. \$0.00, and in the same proportion for smaller quantities. Served by the plate, 40 cts. My place of business is in the old Post-office building, on the corner.  
**JAMES CALLENDER.**

Nov 14-3m.

Figure 1. Fresh Oysters! Advertisement, *Greenbrier Independent*, December 5, 1874.

A newspaper advertisement in the December 5, 1874 issue of the *Greenbrier Independent* promises, “*Fresh Oysters*, either by the gallon, half gallon, quart, pint, or half pint, or by the plate” (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> This advertisement was from a long-standing restaurant in Lewisburg, West Virginia that was owned and operated by African

American residents James Callender and his wife Nancy Letitia Perkins Callender.

Nancy Letitia Perkins was born on April 12, 1842 in Lewisburg when it was still part of Virginia. Family tradition is that Nancy learned to cook in the Mason Mathews household.<sup>2,3</sup> It was illegal to teach an enslaved person to read or write, yet



Figure 2. James Callender & Nancy Perkins Callender's Restaurant Building.

after the Emancipation Proclamation was ratified, Nancy and her husband, James Callender, were business owners. Their restaurant operated for 52 consecutive years, a remarkable achievement. Their restaurant building is now Edith's Health & Specialty Store at 1035 East Washington Street. Figure 2 shows what the building looked like when it was a restaurant. There have been reports of Nancy's ghost wandering upstairs, but that's another story.

About that Coca-Cola sign in the window: Nancy loved Coca-Cola and made certain the restaurant stocked enough bottles for *her* and her customers. Hard to imagine

now, but stocking the soft drink was a clever marketing strategy due to its limited availability at the time. The first glass of Coca-Cola was sold on May 8, 1886 at Jacobs Drugstore in Atlanta, which averaged a mere nine sales a day.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the availability of Coca-Cola contributed to the restaurant's continued success since it was "imported" all the way from Atlanta, Georgia. The importance of offering a revolutionary soft drink is underscored by a legal notice in the July 8th, 1886 issue of the *Greenbrier Independent* that specifically prohibits, "the privilege of selling spirituous liquors," while announcing that the restaurant had been granted a license to continue operating.

James and Nancy Callender began renting the building on Main Street (now Washington Street) from Sally A. Reynolds Patton on April 1, 1874. The term of the rental was \$20.00 per year for five years.<sup>5</sup> According to Greenbrier County Will Book 3, Page 227 – May 15, 1858, Nancy and her mother were given by Mary Lewis Reynolds to Sally Ann Reynolds Patton. Upon Sally Patton’s death in 1892, her property was auctioned off to pay her debts. Nancy was the high bidder for the lot with 39 feet fronting Main Street where the restaurant was located.<sup>6</sup> An announcement in the February 20, 1896 issue of *Greenbrier Independent* reads, “A deed from John A. Preston, commissioner, to Nancy Callender – acres of land in Lewisburg.” Owning property was an exceptional achievement for a woman, especially a woman of color, since women (mostly white) didn’t achieve voting rights until 1920. Nancy Perkins Callender was a pioneer in every sense.

Nancy's husband, James Callender, shared her independent spirit. He also had a sense of humor, in addition to being a successful merchant and a pioneer in his own right, an emancipated slave who pushed the boundaries of the color barrier. Most ex-slaves believed emancipation was a sign that God would soon call them to heaven. Prayer meetings could become quite emotional, with many people praying aloud, asking, beseeching God to let Gabriel blow his horn and summon them to heaven. James Callender had a few misgivings about hearing Gabriel’s horn—

especially since the only way to get to heaven was to die. He knew from experience that nobody was in any hurry to stop living. One evening, he went to church before the others and hid in the upper gallery with a toy horn. When everybody started calling on Gabriel to blow his horn and summon them to heaven, James sounded the call. Panic! Parishioners knocked over benches and ran into walls in their hurry to get outside where they could hide behind bushes and trees. James was the only one laughing, and his trick nearly got him thrown out of future meetings.<sup>7</sup>

Nancy is featured in an advertisement for the “Eating Saloon” from the January 22, 1880 issue of the *Greenbrier Independent*. One of Nancy’s specialties was oyster soup, according to the family’s oral history. Fresh oysters and seafood were imported from Baltimore, Maryland.<sup>8</sup> The logistics of supplying fresh seafood in the 1870s and 1880s meant the restaurant had something special to offer, drawing customers and developing repeat business.

The restaurant became a destination, a place to take visitors. The editor of the *Greenbrier Independent* newspaper wrote a restaurant review for the November 11, 1893 issue: “We were one of a party of gentlemen who enjoyed an excellent dinner at Callender’s Restaurant Tuesday evening, on the invitation of the proprietors. It is needless to say that with two such adepts in the culinary arts as Mrs. Callender (Nancy) and “Aunt” Eliza Cousins the dinner was



prepared in the best style. The party consisted of Judge Campbell, Drs. Beard, C.N. and S.H. Austin, J. E. Bell, Esq., Maj. Stratton, Messrs. Henry Gilmer and Rush Burdette and 'Mr. Editor.'"<sup>9</sup>

"Aunt" was a moniker that many white people affixed to elderly female African Americans. Depending on the context, it can be interpreted as a term of endearment or a racial slur. And sometimes the term was used as a qualifier to establish a glass ceiling between the races. The dining room at Nancy and James Callender's restaurant was "Whites Only." Family and racially similar friends passed freely through the dining room when working at the restaurant, but used the back door and ate in a small room off the back of the kitchen.<sup>10</sup> In an advertisement in the November 11, 1880 issue of the *Greenbrier Independent*, James Callender mentions the availability of "A separate room fitted up for my colored friends."

An announcement from the May 16, 1895 issue of the *Greenbrier Independent* assigns the same, questionable "Aunt" moniker to Nancy, in addition to addressing her with a nickname instead of her given name:

"'Aunt' Nannie Callender sent to this office last Friday four hen eggs, all layed (*sic*) by the same hen, two of which were nearly as large as a goose egg and one not as large as a partridge egg." One can't help but wonder if this was a clever ploy by Nancy to save on advertising dollars and remind the local populace of the restaurant's fresh food.

According to her family's oral history, Nancy was very soft spoken and tiny—a little over four feet tall. Her youngest son, Frank Randolph Perkins, smoothed a wide board and placed it between two chairs for her to use as a table top so she could prepare the pastries that her restaurant was known for instead of standing on a box to roll out the dough.<sup>11</sup> Figure 3 is a photograph of Nancy, most likely taken behind the restaurant because she lived upstairs. Did you notice the chicken in the lower left-hand corner of the picture? Eggs and fresh vegetables were purchased from local farmers. The restaurant sold cookies and pastry by the slice and Nancy was also known for her jelly cake, Boston Creme pie, and George Washington Pie. Although cherries are the prominent feature in George Washington Pie, there is some debate on the accompanying ingredients.<sup>12</sup> Freshly baked bread was certainly featured, since an advertisement promising, "Hot Rolls every evening—Callenders" was listed under "Local Matters" in the June 5, 1913 *Greenbrier Independent* and ran for six months.

The second 'l' is missing from Callender in an advertisement that ran for two months in the *Greenbrier Independent* starting May 17, 1888. Both Nancy and James Callender gained or lost an "l" in their last name during the 1880s and 1890s, when spelling was a bit more arbitrary. Of course, what's an "l" between friends where ice cream is concerned (as advertised at their restaurant)? Especially since ice cream wasn't widely available in grocery stores



before the 1930s—another example of Nancy’s savvy marketing; she was decades ahead of her time. Her prowess in the kitchen is also featured in this advertisement listing: “cake of the best quality,” and “Bakers’ loaf bread always on hand for sale.” Baker’s loaf refers to the loaves of bread that are common today with the widespread use of rectangular tins, but during Nancy’s time, this was the exception: another example of her clever marketing and innovative business acumen.

James Callender died in 1902, so Nancy assumed sole control of the restaurant business. She was recognized as the restaurant’s licensed representative in the legal notices of the April 23, 1903 issue of the *Greenbrier Independent*: “to keep restaurant . . . Nancy Callender, at Lewisburg.” A woman-owned, minority-operated business is unusual today, but practically unheard of in 1903! Underscoring her remarkable achievement and the perceived need to downplay her accomplishments is the wording in an advertisement in the January 2, 1913 issue of the *Greenbrier Independent*: “James Callendar, a well-remembered (*sic*) colored

man, advertises fresh oysters for the Christmas season. [His widow, Nancy Callender, is still conducting the business at the old stand.]” The restaurant remained successful under Nancy’s leadership, although there was a problem in 1904-5 involving the sale of “intoxicating liquor.” The town of Lewisburg brought a lawsuit against Nancy and her youngest son, Frank

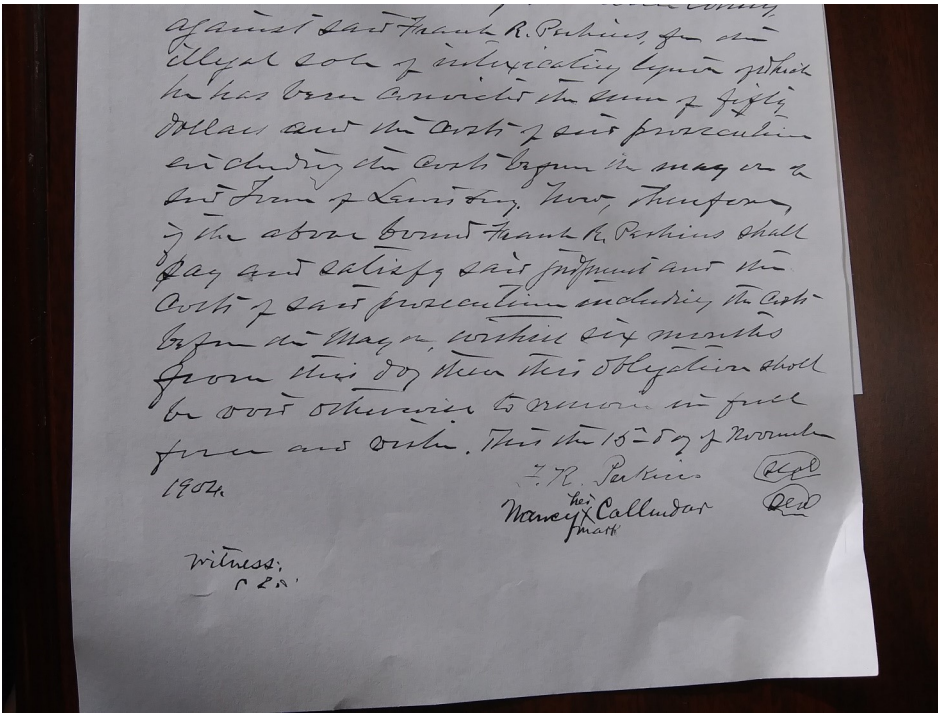


**Figure 3. Nancy Perkins Callender, likely standing in the back yard behind the restaurant.**

Randolph Perkins, who was operating a still behind the restaurant. They were each fined \$50.00— a lot of oysters at twenty-five cents a plate— or approximately \$1500.00 in today’s dollars. Nancy made her “X” on the court record since she couldn’t read or write (Figure 4). Frank, who despite being born into slavery, could read and write, signed his own name.<sup>13</sup>

All of Nancy’s sons, shown in Figure 5, were literate and learned a trade or occupation; Frank learned the barbering trade. In the June 1, 1893 issue of the

*Greenbrier Independent*, his shop is described as, “one of the neatest establishments of the kind in this part of the state.” Like Nancy, “Barber Frank Perkins” understood the value of free press and got his name and place of business mentioned in the August 23, 1918 issue of the *Greenbrier Independent*, bringing to the newspaper office, “a perfect well-



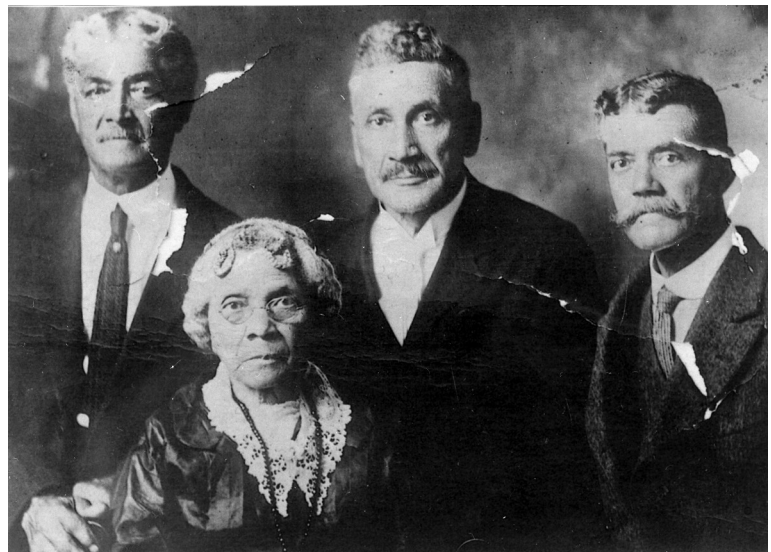
selling whisky. The family's oral history tells that Frank liked to drink, too.<sup>14</sup>

Eugene Perkins was the middle child. An advertisement in the *Greenbrier Independent* on May 1, 1890 announced that he had opened a "Shaving Palace" on Main Street (now East Washington Street). "All work done in First-class Style," Eugene promised, and announced that he was willing to make house calls, "also prepared to Shampoo and Trim Ladies' Hair at

**Figure 4. Document from lawsuit brought against Frank R. Perkins and Nancy Callinder (sic).**

developed cabbage head growing on a stalk which had stood in the ground since last fall and from with the head had been cut—a freak of nature rarely seen." Be it hen's eggs or cabbages, Nancy and Frank found resourceful ways to promote their businesses. Frank also helped his mother with the restaurant, staying in Lewisburg while his two brothers pursued careers elsewhere. As noted above, Frank also had an ongoing sideline in the manufacture of "Intoxicating Spirits" that periodically got him in trouble with the law. Violating the revenue law landed Frank in the Greenbrier jail for thirty days, according to the September 25, 1902 issue of the *Greenbrier Independent*. He was fined 25.00 dollars and sentenced to 90 days of hard labor in 1906 for

their homes." Eugene eventually settled in Charleston, West Virginia. When he would come up from Charleston, he and Frank would drink together—have a good time laughing and talking. Then, when Eugene had gotten tipsy, he would chase all the ladies out of the house.



**Figure 5. Nancy Perkins Callender with her sons Benjamin, Eugene, and Frank Perkins.**

The ladies would send for the “boys,” and they would come and take Eugene off until he sobered up.<sup>15</sup>

Nancy’s eldest son Benjamin Thomas Perkins became a Methodist minister, and led congregations in West Virginia, Virginia, Washington D.C., and Maryland. He is mentioned in the September 8, 1910 issue of the *Greenbrier Independent*, in a story on the 89<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the John Wesley M. E. Church (located at 208 Foster Street and recently featured in the Black History Walking Tour sponsored by the Greenbrier Historical Society).<sup>16</sup>

Benjamin was born in 1859 and enslaved by the Mathews family. He overcame this obstacle to attain a respected position in the community and Methodist M.E. Church. Benjamin issued an eloquent statement regarding the humble origins of his birth in an article from the April 7, 1898 issue of the *Greenbrier Independent*: “. . . you must remember we are not the

negroes of 25 years ago. If you put on your boots and wade into the depths of the doctrines of the church, we are there with you, and if you take a flight to the stars, we are with you, face to face with Orion and the Pleiades.” Clearly, Nancy’s son inherited her independent spirit.

Nancy’s elevated stature in the community is also chronicled in the May 3, 1918 issue of the *Greenbrier Independent*, which notes her patriotism during World War I. “The Sons and Daughters of Enoch, a local fraternal society, of which Nannie Calendar is

President, and Prof. E. A. Bolling [a prominent African American educator in Lewisburg, for whom the Bolling School is named] is Secretary, by a unanimous vote on Tuesday, purchased a \$100 Liberty Bond” (Figure 6). The fraternity wasn’t integrated, yet Nancy and members of the club contributed to the good of society as a whole, which is a fitting testament to their support of the war effort.

### **PATRIOTISM AMONG THE COLORED PEOPLE.**

The Sons and Daughters of Enoch, a local fraternal society, of which Nannie Calendar is President and Prof. E. A. Bolling is Secretary, by a unanimous vote on Tuesday, purchased a \$100 Liberty Bond. A number of our colored people are also buying War Savings Stamps.

Figure 6. Announcement for Liberty Bond purchase in *Greenbrier Independent*, May 3, 1918.

Nancy died on “Friday morning, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1926, aged 83 years, 11 months and 27 days,” according to her obituary notice in the April 16, 1926 edition of the *Greenbrier Independent*. Sadly, the restaurant she started with her husband and operated for five decades closed shortly after her death, but it was also given a glowing tribute in her obituary: “It is but fair to say that a more popular place to get a good meal during all those years never existed than



at 'Aunt Nannie's.'" Nancy was survived by two of her three sons mentioned earlier, Reverend Benjamin Thomas Perkins, and Frank R. Perkins, Sr. Her son Frank and his second wife Hida moved into Nancy's bedroom above the restaurant after she died. One night their cousin Willie heard the low murmur of Frank and Hida talking in Nancy's old bedroom. Then Willie heard footsteps coming up the stairs—very slowly—the way Nancy had climbed the steps. Willie heard the footsteps reach the top of the stairs; she heard the hall door open and close; and then the footsteps

passed down the hallway, very slowly. The sound of a bedroom door opening and closing had Willie terrified; she thought Nancy's ghost was restless because Frank and Hida were in her room.<sup>17</sup>

Another fitting tribute to Nancy, and worth noting, is that the current mayor of Lewisburg, Beverly White, and the author of this article, Stephen Allten Brown, are Nancy's descendants through her son, Frank Randolph Perkins Sr. Nancy Littitia Perkins Callender's pioneering spirit lives on.

### Notes

1. Taken from the *Greenbrier Independent*, a Lewisburg, Wv newspaper which has been digitized for research at the Greenbrier Historical Society's North House Museum in Lewisburg. All other citations from this newspaper are from this same source.
2. Edith E. Perkins Mathews, Oral History Compilation, interviews with: Perry Key Perkins, Mrs. Dorothy Perkins Johnson and family, Mrs. Willie Perkins Miller, Mrs. Carter Bess, Ms. Scharlotta Gardner, Mrs. Harriet M. Williams. 1969-1995. Perkins and Early Related Families African Americans. Greenbrier Historical Society, North House Museum, Lewisburg, WV.
3. Editor's note. Mason Mathews was a prominent merchant and politician who was born in Lewisburg in 1803 to parents Joseph Mathews and Mary Edgar. He was a nephew of Archer Mathews, an original trustee of Lewisburg. He was a sheriff and Commissioner of Revenue of Greenbrier County, a Justice of the Peace for the towns of Frankford and Lewisburg, and a member of the Virginia House of Delegates. He voted against secession in 1861 but later claimed allegiance to the Confederate States of America, and his sons served as officers in the CSA, Wikipedia.org, accessed on August 20, 2021.
4. <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/company/history>, accessed 8/20/2021.
5. Court documents, Perkins and Early Related Families, North House Museum.
6. Court documents, Perkins and Early Related Families, North House Museum.
- Editor's note. Ancestry.com family trees show that Sally Ann Reynolds Patton was a sister to Elizabeth Shore Reynolds Mathews, wife of Mason Mathews discussed in Note 3, so there would have been close ties between these families and households.
- 7-8. Mathews, Oral History Compilation.
9. Editor's Note. Though the original says R. E. Rell, this is likely a printing error and should be R. E. Bell, a prominent merchant in Lewisburg.
- 10-12. Mathews, Oral History Compilation.
13. Court documents, Perkins and Early Related Families, North House Museum.
- 14-15. Mathews, Oral History Compilation.
16. Information on Black history at the North House Museum can be found at <https://www.greenbrierhistorical.org/black-history-365.html>, or call (304) 645-3398 to schedule for the walking tour of Lewisburg.
17. Mathews, Oral History Compilation.

### Figure Credits

All figures courtesy of the Greenbrier Historical Society, with the exception of Figure 5, which is courtesy of the Phyllis Preston Jarrett Collection, West Virginia State Archives.



# Pence Springs Resort Hotel

## By Fred Long



**Figure 1. Hotel soon after construction, 1918.**

It was once one of the most popular tourist attractions in the Greenbrier Valley, a vacation paradise for those seeking a distraction in their daily lives. People came by rail from as far away as New York City, Cincinnati, and Washington, D.C. for the ambience offered at the “Grand Hotel” and a glimpse of the old South. Likewise, it offered a weekend retreat for all of southern West Virginia.

The Pence Springs Hotel opened to the public in June 1918 with all the flavor of a

large country home. Beset by World War I embargoes and labor problems, it had taken nearly two years to complete construction of the 60-room resort with its spacious ballroom and banquet room (Figure 1). Its grounds were immaculate and its nine-hole golf course was the pride of Summers County. The hotel was designed by the Charleston, West Virginia architectural firm of Meanor and Sweeny and was constructed by the Park-Grimm Corporation of Chattanooga, Tennessee. The work was overseen by Dr. George L.

Pence, Jacob D. Pence and Silas H. Pence, sons of Andrew P. Pence who had purchased the property in 1878 and had built an earlier hotel between 1894 and 1897, which burned in 1912.<sup>1</sup>

“In a way the Pence Springs was more popular than White Sulphur Springs,” said Edna Price, an African American whose parents, Preston and Leona Green, worked at the hotel when she was a teenager. “People always said they liked it better. They had the biggest golf course in this section of the State, bigger than that at White Sulphur Springs. The hotel grounds were prettier too and the water took second best in the world.”<sup>2</sup>

The hotel averaged over 125 guests staying at the resort daily, many making it a week-long vacation. On the weekends another hundred or so area residents would take advantage of the golf course where a professional instructor was on hand to assist the beginners. Tennis was another popular sports activity and if you didn't play golf or tennis, you could play croquet on the lawn or a game of whist in the parlor. They also had a billiard room for those so inclined. The Greenbrier River offered some of the finest fishing anywhere and swimming too, at a roped off area where a lifeguard was always on duty. Other recreation included numerous hiking trails, horse-back riding, horse drawn buggy rides and a spirited twenties style dance every Saturday night, hosted by a live band, where the younger generation danced to The Charleston, the Texas

Tommy, and the Black Bottom.<sup>3</sup>

“I never did see them,” Edna said with some resentfulness, “we weren't allowed in. White people got in, that was the difference.”

Edna Price had bitter memories as a young African American girl growing up near the resort where her parents worked. Her father worked on the grounds with other African Americans, tending to the flower gardens, trimming shrubbery, and manicuring the lawns and golf course. Her mother was head of the laundry department. All the housekeeping and maintenance was performed by African Americans.

From the beginning, Edna said, the Pence Springs Hotel operated on the grand scale of a luxury “summer resort.” The hotel employed more than 100 people during its summer or “tourist” season. Most of them, she said, were seasonal African American workers that would return each year. “The customary salary was one dollar per day,” she remembered, and some lived in cottages above the spring. They were the cooks that went to work around sunrise each morning. “They had the better cooks that could prepare the southern-styled foods that the patrons demanded. The hotel management attempted to recreate an atmosphere of the pre-Civil War Antebellum South.”





**Figure 2. Springhouse and bottling workers, G. F. Miller standing with a bottle in hand, “Satch” Kelly standing at far left, circa 1920.**

They also employed a local African American man from Hungard’s Creek who went by the name of “Satch” Kelly. Kelly worked mostly at the spring and dipped water to the guests in glass tumblers. He was always dressed in the neat, clean white coat and entertained the hotel guests that sat around the spring drinking the cool sulphur water that had been awarded second best worldwide at the St. Louis World’s Fair in 1904.<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 3. Colorized photo of springhouse and bottling plant circa 1930.**

Throughout the 1920s an average of two hundred cases of the Pence Spring water was bottled and shipped each week to points all over the United States and especially to cities located along the

Chesapeake and Ohio railroad system (Figure 2 and 3).<sup>5</sup>

“Sulphur water wasn’t all they were drinking,” said Hugh Sweeney, an African



American who worked as a caddy for the “rich White folk” and was making upwards of five to eight dollars on a good weekend. The Pence Springs Hotel was a typical speakeasy of the “Roaring Twenties” era, he added, and “the sulphur water made an excellent mixer.”<sup>6</sup>

West Virginia went “dry” on July 1, 1914, four years before the hotel opened, but in Summers County few people believed it was a crime to take a drink. The hotel hired Howard Gore, another African American from Hungard’s Creek, to furnish the hotel with booze. His principal duty was to travel to Kentucky by rail each week to purchase Kentucky whiskey, primarily Kentucky Bourbon and Scotch. The practice of transporting whiskey in from “wet” states continued until 1920, when the Eighteenth Amendment was enacted. But that didn’t stop the flow of liquor (moonshine) that was made locally by trained moonshiners on Pipestem Creek.<sup>7</sup> This was the era of the “Roaring Twenties” —with its flappers, jazz, speakeasys, and bathtub gin— and throughout the twenties the hotel was know far and wide for selling intoxicating beverages without any fear of harassment from the local authorities.

The practice of bootlegging moonshine whiskey at Pence Springs Hotel apparently continued until the resort facility closed in 1929. There is no evidence that the resort hotel was ever raided by “Prohibition Agents.” Roadblocks, however, were set up along the highway leading through the resort grounds in an effort to hinder the

flow of “spirits” into and out of the hotel premises. But they never produced any satisfactory results because most of the “bootlegging” was on horse-back over mountain trails.<sup>8</sup>

Patronage of the Pence Springs Resort remained relatively constant throughout the twenties. Each weekend the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad would run a special train from Hinton to the resort for the numerous local residents who liked to picnic near the spring, play golf and attend the regular weekend dance. The largest attraction locally was the weekend dance. The hotel would prepare a banquet in the dining room where the patrons would serve themselves in the manner of a buffet. Later that evening they would hold the dance, sometimes in the ballroom and other times in the Pavilion. Attendance often exceeded a hundred, Edna Price remembered. When automotive transportation increased to a sufficient level, a garage and filling station were added to the resort facilities and area patronage increased on weekdays, particularly dining.<sup>9</sup>

Food served at the resort was of the highest quality, freshly prepared each day. The specialty of the house was Southern fried chicken. The resort raised its own chickens in a field located north of the spring house and south of Bennett Cottage, which was near the Valley Heights Road. “Satch” Kelly was in charge of the chicken coop and each morning before sunrise he would kill and clean the fowl that would later be



transported to the hotel. Fresh eggs were also gathered for the morning breakfast. Beef, pork and mutton, along with fresh milk, was supplied by a nearby dairy farm. The hotel also had its own garden, providing its guests with fresh, home-grown vegetables.<sup>10</sup>

The resort complex offered everything that the tourists of the day could desire. Along with modern lodging and steam-heated rooms with private baths (tub or shower), they had a phone connection in each room for those long-distance phone calls the tourist demanded. It also had an electric elevator, one of the first in this area, a barber shop and a gift shop.

To the unsuspecting populace it appeared that the Pence Springs Hotel was prospering but, suddenly during the late fall or early winter following the 1925 tourist season, the Pence Springs Resort complex was sold at public auction on the steps of the Summers County Courthouse. There are two conflicting reports as to what fostered this turn of events. One version is that the resort was slowly going bankrupt because of mismanagement. The other is that some members of the Pence family forced the sale in order to acquire their interest in the Andrew Pence estate. Probably it was a combination of both.<sup>11</sup>

On December 8, 1925, the auction occurred in which John William Johnson, of Alderson, placed the highest bid—\$77,000. Other bids were submitted by Colonel Taylor Vinson, Hans Watts, and Colonel

J.H. Long, all of Huntington and original stockholders in the hotel properties. It's interesting to note that none of the Pence family was present for the sale.<sup>12</sup>

Johnson was reputed to be the wealthiest man in Alderson. He had bought several properties on a whim and all had been successful. When his cousin, Lewis Edgar Johnson, asked him, "Why did you buy that white elephant?" Johnson replied, "It was a bargain."

Johnson decided to open the hotel only during the tourist season (June through September) when the largest number of people patronized the resort. He continued to operate it on the "grand scale" of a luxury resort. The number of guests remained comparatively the same with the golf course being the major attraction. But the revenue from area residents that were in the habit of dining at the resort year-long was missing and the dining facility suffered.

The last record of the Pence Springs Hotel being open to the public is September 3, 1929, when the last dance of the tourist season was held. Two months later the stock market crumbled and a nationwide panic followed. The Great Depression began to stalk the land. Johnson chose to close the resort temporarily and reopen when things got better, or sell the property. He died on December 5, 1930. The resort died with him.

"The combined testimony of former patrons



**Figure 4. School for girls, 1936.**

created an impression that the hotel was indifferent to time," said L.T. Anderson in 1982.<sup>13</sup> "The flapper and jazz age arrived and then was smothered in the grayness of the Great Depression, but the Pence Springs Hotel seems to have remained ricky-tick and ragtime to the end. When I first saw it, the end had come. Its doors were locked and its grounds shabby. The pin-striped flannels and straw skimmers were gone from a croquet court now covered with weeds. Where there had been the soft talk of whist players there was nothing."

In 1936, for a brief six months (January 3 through June 13, 1936) the hotel facilities were used as a vocational school for girls (Figure 4). The school was conducted by the National Youth Administration for girls between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one. All the girls had to be single, unemployed and without resources for further education. About 85 students were enrolled, but the grant for the school dried up and the hotel became dormant again.<sup>14</sup>

Although the grounds were used continuously for family reunions, church

outings, and picnics, it wasn't until 1947 that the hotel facility opened again—this time as the West Virginia State Prison for Women. The Johnson trustees and executors had tried to find a buyer for the property for years. Finally, on July 20, 1944, Hugh and Hall Adams Corporation, of Huntington, offered \$27,500 and the price was agreed upon. About this same time the state was investigating prison conditions with the view in mind of opening a new facility exclusively for women that were housed with the male population at Moundsville.

In 1945 funds were released and on July 13, 1946, the state Board of Public Works purchased the hotel property for \$45,000. On May 8, 1947, the Women's Prison opened with Grace P. Lockard, of Lewisburg, the first Superintendent. The Hugh and Hall Adams Corporation retained ownership of the spring property.<sup>15</sup>

The prison had been touted as one of the best prison systems in the country during the early years, operating on the honor system where training programs were conducted daily to prepare the inmates for their release. But that would change and by the 1970s it became nothing more than an institution to separate criminals from the rest of the world. The appointment of a male warden in 1977, who replaced Warden Mrs. Mabel Sims (Figure 5), along with cuts in funding, began the downfall and a move to close the facility was launched by the state Legislature on

February 13, 1978. The state permitted the building to go into decay and ultimately it closed on March 14, 1983. The inmates were transferred to the federal prison at Alderson.<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 5. Prison Warden Mrs. Mabel Sims.**

On May 20, 1986, O. Ashby Berkley, with a high bid of \$310,000, purchased the property from the state and began the restoration that would convert the prison back to a grand hotel. After eighteen months of extensive renovations, it reopened on Thanksgiving Day, 1988.<sup>17</sup> It would again embrace the old Southern charm, where croquet, badminton, and horseshoes were once again played on the



spacious lawns. It was a place for weddings, family reunions, church functions, and those lazy afternoons after a gourmet meal on the sun porch.

sold the property and it would soon become a private boarding school for teenage girls—the Greenbrier Academy for Girls, still in operation today.<sup>18</sup>

It operated sixteen years, its final day coming on August 29, 2005. Berkley had



#### Notes

- 1 Michael J. Pauley, National Register of Historic Places nomination form for The Pence Springs Hotel District, 1985, National Register form 85000404.
2. Steve Trail and Fred Long, *Historic Pence Springs Resort* (Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Press, 1983), 50.
3. *Ibid.*, 49-51.
4. *Ibid.*, 28.
5. *Ibid.*, 30.
6. *Ibid.*, 51.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, 52.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, 51.
11. *Ibid.*, 55.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, 56.
14. *Ibid.*, 58-60.
15. *Ibid.*, 65, 67.
16. *Ibid.*, 83.
17. *Ibid.*, 95.
18. <https://greenbrieracademy.com/>

#### Figure Credits

All figures courtesy of the author, and are curated in the Long/Trail Collection (A&M.3762) at West Virginia University's West Virginia and Regional History Center.

# Mason Bell and His Lewisburg Store

By Mary Montgomery Lindquist, Ph.D.



**Figure 1. Mason Bell’s Store with grandson Robert Bell and wife Kim (right) and great-grandson Mason and wife Samantha (left) .**

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Did you ever notice the little building in Lewisburg with a person’s name adorning it (Figure 1)? Did you wonder why the shop now occupying the building is called the Sweet Shoppe? Fascinating tidbits from

family records, the *Greenbrier Independent* and other documents weave the 60-year story of this prominent merchant, Mason Bell.

Mason Bell arrived in Lewisburg in 1890 at age 12 with his mother and siblings from Monroe County (Figure 2). The move here was prompted by his father's death and the support of the Bell relatives in Lewisburg. A year later, his uncle gave him a corner of his store, the Henry T. Bell's clothing store. The *Greenbrier Independent* ran this



Figure 2. Mason as a young boy.

notice on July 14, 1892: "I am an agent for all papers, magazines, periodicals, and books published. I will give the publication price. Also keep schoolbooks and supplies. Respectfully, Mason Bell."<sup>1</sup>

It did not take him long to expand his offerings; by 1894 his ads showcased Christmas cards and fireworks.<sup>2</sup> All seemed to be going well for this young man, now 19 years old, until August 3, 1897. These were the headlines in the Thursday, August 5 *Greenbrier Independent*:

**FIRE! FIRE! FIRE! DISASTROUS FIRE IN LEWISBURG TUESDAY MORNING**  
The flames Lick up Thirteen Business Houses, Inflicting Heavy Losses upon our Town and Business Men. Lewisburg Hotel, both Bank Buildings and Eight Stores in Ruins.<sup>3</sup>

Mason and other merchants moved to the Town Hall and a month later he moved to the Buster Building, at the corner of

Jefferson and Main (now Washington Street).<sup>4</sup> He wasted no time in building back his inventory, but the space was limited. One of the buildings destroyed in the fire was Miss Bettie Foster's Store-House.<sup>5</sup> In July 1899, at age 20, Mason seized on an opportunity to buy the 10' x 50' [actually, 16' wide and about 48' long] lot on Main Street from Bettie Foster and began building a store immediately.<sup>6</sup> One of the first

new products he added was Whitman's Chocolates and the *Greenbrier Independent* responded with the story shown in Figure 3.

ONE of the neatest and prettiest stores in Greenbrier is the book-store of Mason Bell in Lewisburg. The store is new, the stock is new and, best of all, Mason is wide awake, live as a cricket, polite as a French dancing master and ever ready to put himself to any sort of trouble to serve a customer. His store is headquarters for school books and supplies,—stationery, pens, pencils, pads, the latest novels, magazines, newspapers, novelties and a whole lot of other pretty and useful things too numerous to mention. If you want a box of the choicest candy on the market here is the place to find it, and Mason proposes to have on hand for the holidays a supply of these delicacies that will set every mouth in town and country a-watering.

Figure 3. Advertisement for Mason's store in *Greenbrier Independent*, November 9, 1899.



Although he began with a modest inventory, he was alert to the changing world and the needs of the community. During the next twenty-four years, he added sporting goods, hammocks, wallpaper, the entire line of Kodaks, leather goods including long gloves, china, clocks, portable typewriters, picture framing and more. One of his favorite additions was the Victrola and Victor Records and in 1919, he advertised:

*MUSIC---is a wartime necessity else the Government would not have a band in every regiment. Buy Victrola---it brings you all the music of all the world. \$15-\$250.*<sup>7</sup>

His store must have been packed full, so in 1924 he sold the store. Soon after this advertisement appeared in the *Greenbrier Independent* (Figure 4).<sup>8</sup> Reading the advertisement, I finally knew why it is called the Sweet Shoppe. Mason Bell moved across the street to a larger store begun as the Mason Bell and Company. In 1929 it was incorporated as the Lewisburg Furniture Store & Co. and run by Mason.<sup>9</sup> This large store carried furniture, appliances, china, silverware, and much more---and, of course, the Victrola. Amoret, Mason's daughter, tells that when a child she feared going into the store because of the huge Victrola Dog, Nipper, was sitting in the window over the door.<sup>10</sup>

### The Man

Robert J. Bell and Mollie E. Brown of

Roanoke Valley were married on September 3, 1877. They moved to Blacksburg, Virginia where their first child, Mason, was born. They also had six other children, three of whom died in childhood. Mason's father died when Mason was 12 years old; his mother moved the family to Lewisburg to be near her husband's brothers who were successful merchants.<sup>11</sup>

In 1892 Mason and his brother Robert joined the Old Stone Presbyterian Church. After serving a brief time as deacon, he was elected elder in 1917. A tribute to him in the history of the church reads: "Both his ability and disposition made him a valuable member of a deliberative body. The words, faithful, able, and dedicated characterize this member, but they do not completely



Figure 4. The Sweet Shoppe's Opening Advertisement in *Greenbrier Independent*, June 7, 1924.

depict the man. There was decided joy and enthusiasm about his church life."<sup>12</sup>

His generosity of his time and service is evidenced by his willingness to be the collector of funds for many causes——the flooded people of China in 1912, the starving children of Belgium in 1917, the starving children of Central and Eastern Europe and Armenia in 1920, and later for those affected by the Mississippi floods.<sup>13</sup> He was a charter member of the local Red Cross (organized by patriotic women) and served as its chairman for many years.<sup>14</sup> He also was active in other efforts during World War I such as selling thrift stamps for children and encouraging the purchase of war bonds.<sup>15</sup> This brief description gives you an idea of his service to the community, which continued long after the focus of this article (1892-1924).

Mason served on the City Council for years, was active in the Democratic party, was often a jury member, and was a Mason (Knights of the Templar and many other branches).<sup>16</sup> He joined a group of men to establish another cemetery in Lewisburg, which much later became the Rosewood Cemetery where he is buried. He was an active member of the Lewisburg Business Men's Association and supported the Greenbrier County Woman's Education Membership.<sup>17</sup> He also was busy with entrepreneurship efforts, being part of the groups who began the Limestone Telephone Company, the Greenbrier Motor Company, the Greenbrier Smokeless Coal

Company, and the Seneca Drug Company.<sup>18</sup> The coal and drug companies did not thrive, but the Greenbrier Motor Company still exists. The Limestone Telephone Company was in business until 1928.<sup>19</sup> One story he shared with his children is about the telephone company's effort to place poles for the telephone lines. One female citizen was irate when she discovered a hole in front of her home. When the workman came back the next day, they found her in the hole, determined to stay. They found an alternative and the line was installed.<sup>20</sup>

Mason's father, who had completed his education at what is now Washington and Lee University, had taught his young children. His daughter Amoret remembers him as being a Latin scholar and an avid reader.<sup>21</sup> When the family moved to Lewisburg, Mason attended Greenbrier Male Academy for one year where he received honors at the end of the year: distinguished performance on the English exam as well as recognition for excellence in spelling, arithmetic, geography, and Latin.<sup>22</sup> His lack of formal education did not stop him from being greatly involved in educational efforts. His youngest daughter, Mary Ellen, wrote in a paper for high school, "Daddy was always studying, he was a wonderfully educated man, but had to stop school very early. The family had to have money, he was never bitter, but more determined to keep learning."<sup>23</sup> He served on the Board of the Lewisburg Seminary Institute and later the Greenbrier College

Board of Trustees. His store was the bookstore for the schools in the area and his ads were frequent in the annuals of Greenbrier College and Greenbrier Military School. In 1924, he joined others in the passionate plea of friends of OUR COLLEGE [Greenbrier College] to retire the debt of \$30,000.<sup>24</sup> This was shortly after being involved in securing funds for the building of the present Greenbrier Hall after the disastrous fire of 1921. He never ceased to help others and to be involved in causes for the community and his country.

J.R. Cole's *History of Greenbrier County* portrays many citizens of the area. Mason was no exception and the tribute to him is also one to the citizens of the county. "Every community is in need of good schools, good newspapers and good bookstores. Lewisburg is particularly well favored in this respect. The bookstore owned by Mason Bell bespeaks for the intelligence of the reading public of Lewisburg and the support given them reflects credit on the public-spirited citizenship of the area."<sup>25</sup>

This busy young man also found time for socializing; I think the quote about the joy and enthusiasm for church life could well be extended beyond the church. There were many personal notes in the paper of his attendance at weddings and other social events. A popular activity was camping which occurred almost annually. One was in 1899 and the group is shown in the

picture entitled "Hillbilly Camping Trip" (Figure 5). Another was described in the September 1909 *Greenbrier Independent*: a group of 14 single men and 14 single ladies along with cooks and chaperons, spent 10 days camping about 24 miles west of Alderson. One of the women was my spinster sixth-grade teacher; I could not believe she ever did something like that!<sup>26</sup>



**Figure 5. Mason (in his beret) on the Hillbilly Camping Trip.**

Yet, Mason remained single until Amoret Moore appeared in his life. He taught her in Sunday School while she was a student at Greenbrier College. They were married in 1926 when he was 48 and she was 21, in her hometown of Acme, North Carolina.<sup>27</sup> The Bells remained prominent in Lewisburg while raising and educating their six children—Mason, Frank, Betty Brown, Robert, Amoret and Mary Ellen. Figure 6 shows Mason as an adult.





**Figure 6. Mason as an adult.**

Mary Ellen wrote that her father always brought the children gifts when he went to New York or Chicago on buying trips. She also wrote "Daddy loved everyone and as far as I know everyone loved him. Everyone was his friend, he certainly was their friend."<sup>28</sup>

I barely remember Mr. Bell, but I do remember he always provided change for the children to go to the movies on Saturday afternoons and to buy comic books. The huge supply of comic books was

in the small playhouse behind their home on Washington Street. We spent hours on the bunk beds reading. I also remember the day he died when Mary Ellen was nine and Amoret was twelve. Someone came to school for them, the two youngest girls. I saw them leave school and I still remember the hush of the hall. After doing this research I was not surprised to read in Mr. Bell's obituary: "All business in Lewisburg ceased for one hour during the funeral of this good man..."<sup>29</sup>

## Notes

1. *Greenbrier Independent*, July 14, 1892.
2. *Greenbrier Independent*, January 17, 1894.
3. *Greenbrier Independent*, August 5, 1897.
4. *Greenbrier Independent*, September 9, 1897.
5. Kenneth D. Swope. "The Great Lewisburg Fire: August 3, 1897, *Journal of the Greenbrier Historical Society*, Vol IV, No. 1, 73-79.
6. *Greenbrier Independent*, July 19, 1899.
7. *Greenbrier Independent*, January 31, 1919.
8. *Greenbrier Independent*, June 7, 1924.
9. *Greenbrier Independent*, June 13, 1929.
10. Amoret Bell (Bunn), manuscript provided to Mary Montgomery Lindquist by the author.
11. J. R. Cole. *History of Greenbrier County*, (Lewisburg, West Virginia: J R. Cole, 1917), 186.
12. John F. Montgomery. *The History of the Old Stone Presbyterian Church 1783-1983*, (Parsons, West Virginia: McClain Printing Company, 1983), 215.
13. *Greenbrier Independent*, June 7, 1912, February 2, 1917, December 31, 1920, and April 29, 1927.
14. *Greenbrier Independent*, March 12, 1920 and September 21, 1923.
15. *Greenbrier Independent*, April 31, 1918 and May 13, 1918.
16. J. R. Cole. *History of Greenbrier County*, (Lewisburg, West Virginia: Published by J R. Cole, 1917), 186.
17. *Greenbrier Independent*, Dec. 15, 1918 and July 23, 1917.
18. *Greenbrier Independent*, August 6, 1927, February 16, 1923, January 18, 1929, and October 11, 1911.
19. *Greenbrier Independent*, June 28, 1928.
20. Correspondence with Amoret Bell (Bunn).
21. Amoret Bell (Bunn), manuscript provided to Mary Montgomery Lindquist by the author.
22. *Greenbrier Independent*, June 4, 1891.
23. Mary Ellen Bell (Haefner), high school paper, manuscript provided to Mary Montgomery Lindquist by the author's daughter, Susan Haefner.
24. *Greenbrier Independent*, Oct. 3, 1924.
25. Cole. *History of Greenbrier County*, 175.
26. *Greenbrier Independent*, September 2, 1909.
27. *Greenbrier Independent*, September 10, 1926.
28. Mary Ellen Bell (Haefner), high school paper, manuscript provided to Mary Montgomery Lindquist by the author's daughter, Susan Haefner.
29. *Greenbrier Independent*, September 22, 1949.

## Figure Credits

- Figure 1. Courtesy of Mason Bell's grandson Robert and wife Kim Bell.  
Figure 2. Courtesy of Susan Haefner, daughter of Mary Ellen Bell Haefner.  
Figures 3 and 4. Courtesy of Greenbrier Historical Society's North House Museum Archives.  
Figure 5. Courtesy of Amoret Bell Bunn's daughter, Amoret Bunn.  
Figure 6. Courtesy of the Old Stone Presbyterian Church.



*Unlocking Our Past. Securing Our Future.*

# Perpetual Structural History at Martin & Jones

By Quincy Gray McMichael



**Figure 1.** Postcard depicting exterior of Greenbrier Produce Company building at 422 West Edgar Avenue; note the train tracks into the loading area.

The red brick building at 422 West Edgar Avenue in Ronceverte, West Virginia resembles a living museum. Worn brick provides a humble backdrop for bold lettering that marks: “MARTIN & JONES” in black paint across the big building’s faded façade. Inside, history hangs in the cool, still air. After nearly one hundred and twenty years, the maple flooring is intact, if

a bit worn in places, and the massive oak beams that support the three-story structure continue to hold each floor aloft. Even the proprietor is still named Jack — just like his grandfather, Jack Kirby Martin, who inherited both the business and building from his father, Reese F. Martin, in the late 1950s.<sup>1</sup> Yet, despite steady family history and a reliable multi-century



inventory of durable hardware—from “Shot Head Hungarian Nails” to “Horse Nails” to the typical ten-penny—the aging building that houses Martin & Jones, Inc. is not a static space. Since the turn of the last century, this stately structure has stretched from two floors to three, billowed beyond the bounds of its original building lot, and undergone numerous unobtrusive adjustments to better attend its purpose—and a few surprising modifications as well. The subtly ductile manner in which the building—along with the business housed inside—has adapted to changing times speaks not only to West Virginian ingenuity, but to the understated versatility of the historic structure itself.

Despite these many changes—whether planned or impromptu—the Martin & Jones building exudes antiquity. Even the now-rusty Ronceverte address hints at another era, marking a place in history where proximity to the rails was of utmost priority, with twenty-eight passenger trains stopping just across the street each day.<sup>2</sup> A turn-of-the-century advertisement, entitled “The Industries and Advantages of Ronceverte, Greenbrier County, West Virginia,” touts: “On main line of Chesapeake and Ohio Railway system. All trains stop,” as well as: “Junction point of Greenbrier division of C. & O. connecting with Pittsburg [sic] and the north,” and: “Junction of L. & R. Railroad.”<sup>3</sup> In the early 1900s, Ronceverte was a small but bustling riverside city with a population of 3,500 and “Two National Banks,” a “Modern

Steam Laundry,” “Three Hotels. Two Newspapers,” and—notably—“No saloons.”<sup>4</sup> The advertisement goes on to list the businesses active in Ronceverte at that time, including a “Soft-drink Bottling Works,” “Modern Furniture Factory,” “Ice and Cold Storage Plant,” “Large Lumber Mills,” and “Iron Works, Foundry, and Machine Shops,” among many others.<sup>5</sup> Nowhere does this flyer mention a hardware store, but a hint of the Martin & Jones building is evident in the mention of Ronceverte’s “Wholesale Fruit and Produce House,” located at 422 West Edgar Avenue.<sup>6</sup> The story of this remarkable red brick building, then, precedes even Martin & Jones, Inc.

In the late 1800s, the Ronceverte building with which Martin & Jones now seems utterly synonymous was built to house the Greenbrier Produce Company.<sup>7</sup> William T. Jones, a building contractor from the area near Lynchburg, Virginia, supervised the construction of what was then a two-story brick building, erected just paces from the lively railway depot (Figure 1).<sup>8</sup> Jones, recognizing the dearth of hardware supplies in Ronceverte, partnered with Reese F. Martin, who also hailed from Lynchburg, Virginia, to incorporate Martin & Jones, which first operated out of Hurxthal’s Building down the street.<sup>9</sup> After several years, Martin & Jones purchased the building at 422 West Edgar Avenue and moved in—tinware, axe heads, and all.<sup>10</sup> Missing records obscure the exact year of the transition, but a 1914 photograph



**Figure 2. Group of men, including R.F. Martin and his son Jack Kirby, in front of 422 West Edgar Avenue, 1914.**

photograph depicts a group, including Reese F. Martin and his son Jack Kirby, posing on the steps in front of the current Martin & Jones location (Figure 2). In addition to the building's convenient, central locale, the former produce outlet was already well-outfitted for use as a hardware store. An innovative water lift—a hydro-powered platform used to move heavy products from one floor to another—and sturdy wooden slides made the transfer of stock between levels nearly effortless.<sup>11</sup> The building also boasted an interior loading area with a dedicated railroad spur, which allowed a boxcar packed with product to be enclosed in the warehouse until emptied. Eventually, though, Martin & Jones needed greater space to house the hefty inventory intrinsic to their hardware business. In the

Spring of 1928, the proprietors expanded the building upward by adding a third story, which is apparent even today because of the natural variation in brick (Figure 3).<sup>12</sup>

The 1928 addition, while built of brick, appears more uniform in both color and texture than the initial late-1800s brickwork visible in the building's first

two stories. While the windows in the original structure boast hand-chiseled stone lintels, when Martin & Jones added the



**Figure 3. Exterior of 422 West Edgar Avenue, 2021.**

third floor addition, they opted for steel lintels instead, but did place the new windows in line with the existing second story casements. Most significant were the adjustments necessary to modify the light-duty structure that supported a sloping roof into load-bearing joists that would underpin a flat third floor.<sup>13</sup> The resourceful builders reused the original lumber wherever possible, and also repurposed boards from shipping containers. In order to reinforce the existing oak beams, they scabbed rough-sawn lumber along both sides of each beam, thus providing a more reliable foundation for the new, sturdier floor joists.<sup>14</sup> In between beams, the builders nailed short, bias-cut lumber in a zigzag pattern to further augment the joists that would support the third floor.

Stewart Brand, in his superb reflection on architectural flexibility over time, *How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built*, quotes artist Brian Eno's thoughts on design:

We are convinced by things that show internal complexity, that show the traces of an interesting evolution... This is what makes old buildings interesting to me. I think that humans have a taste for things that not only show that they have been through a process of evolution, but which also show they are still a part of one. They are not dead yet.<sup>15</sup>

The physical structure of Martin & Jones is nothing if not completely convincing. When confronted with the timeworn brick exterior, one cannot help but to feel pulled

to walk inside; once the door swings closed behind, the long strips of burnished maple pull one's feet forward, first down one aisle, then another, eyes traveling up thick painted posts and glancing along walls stacked with shelving. Every part of this structure, from the broad, square way the building presides over now-quiet Edgar Avenue to the green paint that graces the thin edges of tall, built-in displays, offers "traces of an interesting evolution."<sup>16</sup>

The Martin & Jones building has both witnessed and withstood the weight of history—from global to local. While the structure itself was never impacted by war, the people inside worked under the twin burdens of deprivation and fear born of armed conflict during World War I. Unsurprisingly, then, the 1918 German surrender is memorialized in three separate, jubilant locations—two on the second floor, and one on the first (Figure 4). In this way, the Martin & Jones building exemplifies how a structure absorbs the experiences of its occupants, even if those people are only in residence during business hours. In fact, a building only "learns" through use by its inhabitants. An unoccupied structure is like the proverbial tree that falls in the empty woods: without human interaction—and consequent adaptation, however minor—no building can achieve the luster that only appropriate functionality bestows.

Just as well-used structures "learn" through their occupants, maintaining an historic building like the one at 422 West



Edgar Avenue teaches meticulous care, and mindful record keeping. The Martin & Jones building is fortunate to have a keen-minded man like Jack at the helm: “Water only reached the sales floor twice: in 1985 and 1996,” he reports, thinking back through the floods he has witnessed. “In 2016, the water almost touched the door of the furniture showroom.” Jack tells of at least one earlier flood—sometime in the 1950s—that dampened the building’s dark, brick-lined basement, but memory of prior floods faded with previous generations.<sup>17</sup>

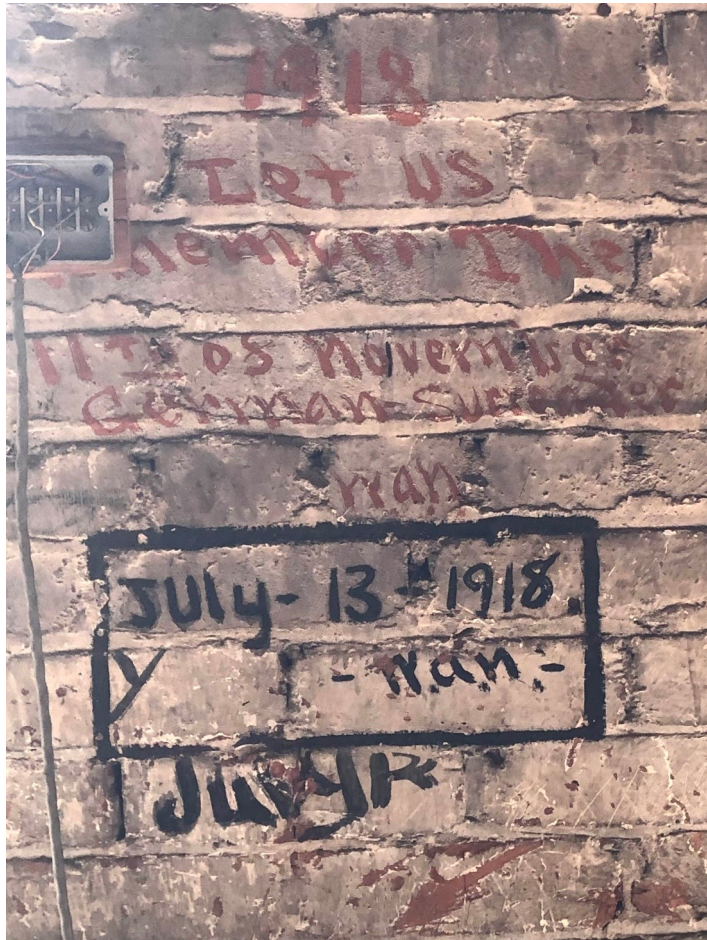


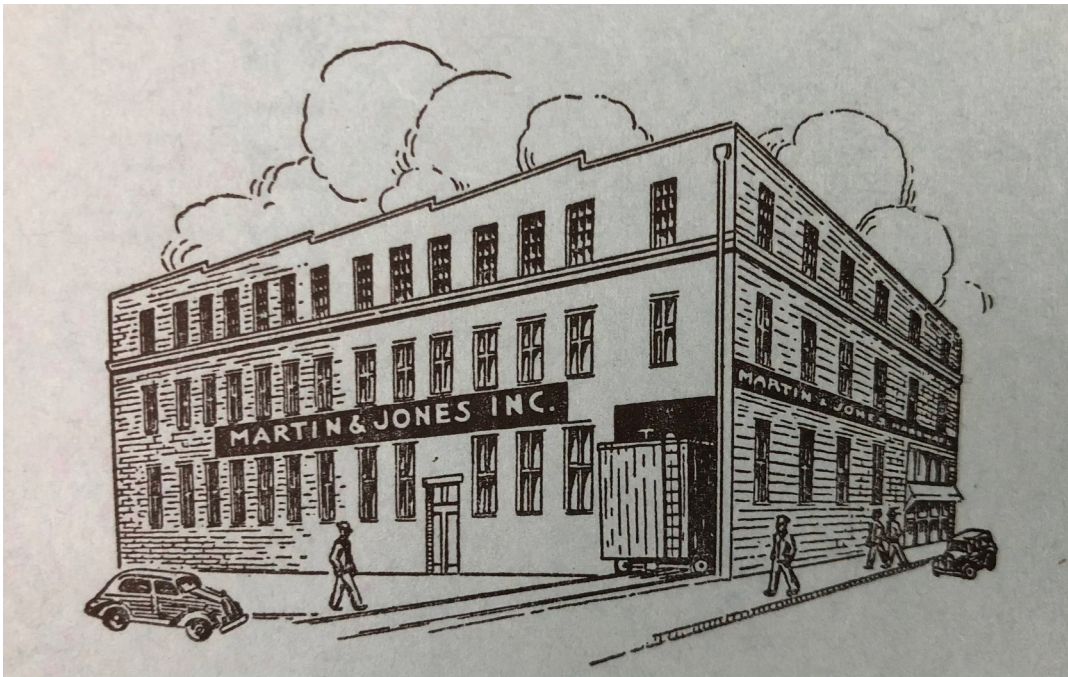
Figure 4. Commemoration of 1918 German Surrender, 2021.

Fire, too, helped to shape the story of this structure. For the first few decades of the 1900s, the original boxy brick building comprised the whole of Martin & Jones (Figure 5). In the 1940s, however, a fire swept through the White Elephant, next door—a local market with gas pumps, including a boardinghouse on the second floor and stables behind. The fire, which was so hot that it damaged the brick wall of 422 West Edgar, destroyed the White Elephant (Figure 6).<sup>18</sup> Soon after, Martin & Jones purchased the singed lot.



Figure 5. Line Drawing of 422 West Edgar Avenue, 1932 .





**Figure 6. Line Drawing of 422 West Edgar Avenue, 1944.**

The damaged brick exterior sidewall received a skim coat of stucco and became a shared interior wall between the surviving hardware sales floor and the new furniture gallery that Martin & Jones built on the site of the former White Elephant (Figure 7).<sup>19</sup> Thus, the multifaceted hardware store moved their furniture display downstairs, and regained the large warehouse space that had been the second floor furniture gallery.

In addition to calamity, necessity has also pushed for adaptation at Martin & Jones. The ceiling of the shop, an area near the back of the warehouse used for lawnmower repairs, is sheathed with thick aluminum refrigerator panels. Jack, wearing a glint of the smile he carries in his pocket, explains how, after this back portion of the building was constructed in 1994, cold temperatures

made for freezing fingers when fiddling with broken lawnmowers. Jack's wry expression suggests an approximation of Stewart Brand's thoughts on old, cold buildings, recorded in *How Buildings Learn*:

"a drafty old building reminds us what the weather is up to outside and invites us to do something about it—put on a sweater; open a window. Rain is loud on the roof. You smell and feel the seasons. Weather comes in the building a bit. That sort of invasion we would condemn in a new building and blame the architect, but in a[n]...old building—designed for some other use, after all—there's no one to blame."<sup>20</sup>

This seems particularly suitable for the Martin & Jones building, as hardware customers dash in from their hot gardens for an ash handle to repair the hoe that broke

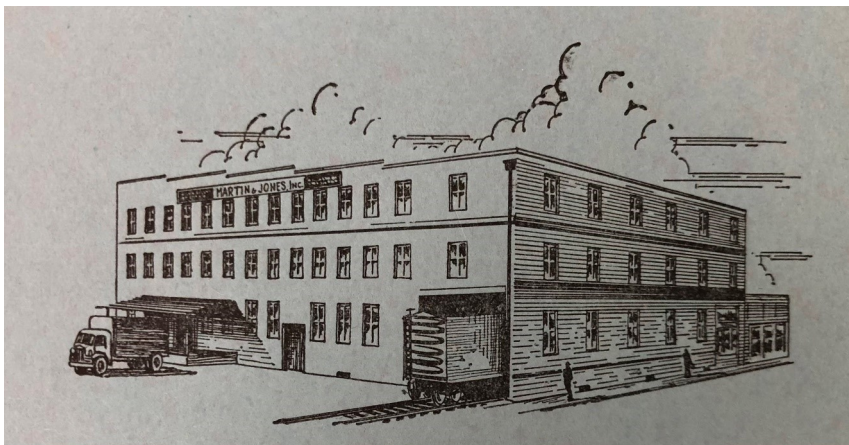


Figure 7. Line Drawing of 422 West Edgar Avenue, 1958.

while hilling potatoes, or drift in through fast-falling snow, swathed in coveralls, for all-season bar and chain oil. Why not embrace a supposed structural deficiency that allows for a more honest connection with one's customers—many of whom walk into the store fresh from work in the outdoors?

Human nature compels inhabitants to leave their imprint on the structures in which they take shelter. These marks can be as inadvertent as high polish on the brass of a much-used doorknob or as deliberate as lines denoting a growing child's height on the inside of a pantry doorjamb. In the Martin & Jones building, reminders of many generations are inscribed in the floors, walls, and counters. The most tangible of such spots is, perhaps, the smooth, wide divot in the dense maple flooring behind the sales counter, where generations of cashiers have stood, pen in hand, noting orders, sturdy feet anchoring them to the floor as they write.

Yet, many of the most curious remnants of this building's history remain hidden from

view. Few customers, for instance, are able to see the packing department, on the second floor of the warehouse.

When, in the era of the

railroad, a customer in Alderson—or Marlinton, or Hot Springs—would write with a request for hob nails, or rat traps, or tin cups, those items would be wrapped and tagged in the packing department so they would be ready to ship out on the next suitable train.<sup>21</sup> In those days, packages were often tied with string, and this string must have been cut with a knife, on one particular board in the packing department. The people who tied those packages, who cut those strings, did not see themselves as woodworkers, but, over time, they whittled out a record of their work on this cutting board, leaving one deft mark for each string cut (Figure 8). The workers are long gone, but the building holds their stories in these grooves, the lines on wood testifying to their daily labor.

The men who built the packing department, though, did see that work as a worthy contribution—and they made sure that they would be remembered by future generations at Martin & Jones. In no less than three locations in this small room on the second story of the warehouse, one overly eager builder—C.R. Lacy—scribed





Figure 8. Packing Room cutting board, 2021.



Figure 9. "C.R. Lacy" graffiti, 2021.

his name, in hopes that his handiwork would be preserved, and his offering appreciated (Figure 9). As Lacy's words indicate, one of the joys of an older building, replete with many inherent imperfections, is the freedom such a structure offers its users. If an employee smacks her forehead one-too-many times on a low door header, perhaps she pulls out her paintbrush to scrawl a quick: "DUCK" as a reminder to avert future injury (Figure 10). Similar edifying admonitions are on display throughout the building, including an undeniable "Keep Out" at the top of the little ladder leading to the covert key nook.

Nor do adaptations need to be sanctioned in order to be notable. Many longtime Martin & Jones customers have never noticed the key nook—hidden in plain sight at the front of the store. In one corner, a tight ladder leads up to a perfect tiny



Figure 10. "DUCK," 2021.

room, ringed with keys and tools and decades of minuscule metal shavings—highlighted in surprisingly electric blue paint. This innovative transformation, though not in step with any historical code, was the contribution of a twelve-year-old named Abby, who came to work with her grandmother Betty, the longtime office





Figure 11. Repainted Key Nook, 2021.

manager of Martin & Jones. After whiling away many hours in the store, Abby decided that the key nook needed to be redecorated. While all of the adults were busily doing their jobs, Abby found a can of paint and proceeded to revise the décor of the key nook from the boring brown of hundred-year-old wood to a striking hue of electric blue (Figure 11).<sup>22</sup> While not everyone applauds the unexpected change, the intensity of the color does heighten the muted light offered by the loft's one hazy window. Stewart Brand would, no doubt, approve of the "bright grace note" Abby added to the key nook.<sup>23</sup>

Why does the relatively recent addition of bright blue paint, despite lack of authorization and seeming disregard for

historical significance, still infer a type of asynchronous congruence? This graffiti—while more garish in appearance, and certainly less visible—serves a similar function as the century-old letters painted—and repainted—in stately black across the building's façade. As Brand quotes Eno in *How Buildings Learn*: "humans have a taste for things that not only show that they have been through a process of evolution, but which also show they are still a part of one."<sup>24</sup> Every time a painter traces that "MARTIN & JONES" with her brush, she refreshes the perpetual history of this inimitable building. And that electric blue paint framing hundred-year-old hand tools? Just a twelve-year-old's way of reminding the proprietors: this old building is "not dead yet."<sup>25</sup>

## Notes

1. Quincy Gray McMichael. “Try Martin & Jones,” *Greenbrier Valley Quarterly*, no. 64, Spring 2021, 45-57, <https://www.gvquarterly.com/blog/2021/7/22/try-martin-amp-jones>.
2. “The Industries and Advantages of Ronceverte” flyer, 1906-1907.
3. *ibid.*
4. *ibid.*
5. *ibid.*
6. *ibid.*
7. Jack Tuckwiller (store proprietor) interviewed by the author, March 2021.
8. *ibid.*
9. *ibid.*
10. *ibid.*
11. *ibid.*
12. *ibid.*
13. *ibid.*
14. *ibid.*
15. Brand, Stewart. *How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They’re Built* (New York: Penguin, 1994), 19.
16. *ibid.*
17. Jack Tuckwiller (store proprietor) interviewed by the author, July 2021.
18. *ibid.*, March 2021.
19. *ibid.*, July 2021.
20. Brand. *How Buildings Learn*, 67.
21. Jack Tuckwiller (store proprietor) interviewed by the author, July 2021.
22. *ibid.*
23. Brand. *How Buildings Learn*, 236.
24. *ibid.*, 19.
25. *ibid.*

## Figure Credits

Figure 1: Postcard courtesy of Alice Hollingsworth and her mother Gwen Clingman, from the Carey Jordan family scrapbooks.

Figure 2, 5-7, Courtesy of Jack Tuckwiller.

Figures 3-4, 8-11, Courtesy of the author.



*Unlocking Our Past. Securing Our Future.*



# The A. Dunlap & Co. Store in Red Sulphur Springs: Products and Patrons, 1850, Monroe County West Virginia

By Fred Ziegler



Figure 1. The Red Sulphur Springs Resort, 1857, by Edward Beyer.

This article is based on an 1850 A. Dunlap & Co. store ledger curated in the Caperton Museum, Monroe County Historical Society.<sup>1</sup> This ledger is of great interest as the Dunlap family was prominent in the politics of early Monroe County as well as in the financing and operation of the Red Sulphur Springs resort. Analysis of entries from this ledger provides a look at consumer goods of the middle 19<sup>th</sup> century, and insights into the Red Sulphur

economy and local household economies. The article will provide elucidation about the ownership of the ledger, the nature of the A. Dunlap & Co store, and the nature of and origins of products it sold.

The Dunlap store was located in Red Sulphur Springs, a resort community first visited as a watering place by Euro-Americans about 1800 and greatly expanded in the 1830s. Like other spring

resorts, this one included a hotel, rows of guest cottages, a social hall, a springs pavilion, bath houses, and other support structures, and could accommodate 350 guests (Figure 1). The resort continued until World War I, when the remaining buildings were torn down and the land subdivided for sale.<sup>2</sup>

The first question to be addressed is who was the “A. Dunlap” printed on the ledger? Was it Addison or his younger brother, Alexander? The reader might assume that Addison was the owner of the ledger as he was better known and eventually became a part owner and operator of the Red Sulphur Springs resort.<sup>3</sup> But the 1850 census lists Addison (1804-1870) as a farmer while it lists Alexander (1812-1853) as the merchant in the family.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Addison was the enumerator of the 1850 federal census, which attests to the accuracy of the family entries! Also, the store is mentioned in Alexander’s will as being at the crossroads in Red Sulphur Springs and that is the point where Fitz Run enters Indian Creek, about where the modern State Route 12 crosses this creek. Alexander lived a mile downstream and was listed in the census with a family of six, together with three other merchants, two tailors and a physician; it is assumed that these five others may have worked at the store. This is because two of the merchants were his nephews, because the store ledger suggests that the store specialized in sewing materials, and because doctors would have been in demand at a health spa such as the Red Sulphur Springs resort. The 1850

federal census further lists the next entry to Alexander Dunlap as A. Dunlap & Co., listed as a Hotel. This suggests that the store was on the ground floor while the rest of the building was for guests.

The layout of the ledger is a standard accounting with the type, quantity, and price of the product sold, and with the names of the debtors, and occasional creditor. For this article, seven days of sales, June 1 to June 8, 1850, were compiled in Tables 1 and 2, utilizing the products sold together with the number of sales of this item, and the price. Table 3 gives the buyers’ names with the number of visits and their occupation as listed in the 1850 federal census of Monroe County. It should be mentioned that ledgers like this one likely listed only those who bought on credit, so cash purchases are lost to us. The customers classified as visitors/outsideers (likely mostly guests at the resort, and identified by their absence in the 1850 census and other local records) number just four out of 62 shoppers altogether. So, there is probably some bias in the products listed. The items purchased by the visitors/outsideers may have differed from those purchased by locals. Buying on credit would not generally have been an option for the visitors/outsideers. Question marks are entered in Table 3 where the surname matched some entries in the 1850 census, but the given name was ambiguous. Most of these are known from other Monroe County records to be inhabitants, but it is possible that a few of the “?” persons were visitors/outsideers.

**Table 1. Cloth or clothing-related items**

Category/ Product	Sales	Price	Category/ Product	Sales	Price
<u>Yard Goods (Cloth)</u>			<u>Hats</u>		
Calico	10	\$0.10-16 1/2 yd	Chip Hat	17	\$0.20-0.25
Domestic (brown, black)	7	\$0.10-0.12 1/2 yd	Fine Brand Bonnet	2	\$2.50
Linen (low, brown, Irish)	6	\$0.16 1/2-0.75 yd	Mexican Hat	1	\$2.25
Jean	3	\$0.33-0.45 yd	Fine Hat	1	\$2.00
Gingham	1	\$0.20 yd	Cashmere Hat	1	\$1.00
Silk	1	\$0.05 ?	Slouch Hat	2	\$0.75
Alpaca	1	\$0.75 yd	Child's Hat	1	\$0.38
Check	1	\$0.20 yd	Wool Hat	1	\$0.25?
Wool	1	\$0.28 yd			
Crepe	1	\$0.75 yd	<u>Shoes</u>		
Switz (Swiss?)	1	\$0.62 yd	Best Shoes	3	\$2.00
Holland	1	\$0.72 yd	Best Brogans	1	\$1.75
Bobinet	1	\$0.38 yd	Coarse Shoes	1	\$1.13
Jaconet	1	\$0.34 yd	Shoes	1	\$1.00
Lace	1	\$0.12 yd	Misses Shoes	1	\$0.50
Ribbon	3	\$0.13-0.25 yd	Black for Shoes	1	\$0.50
<u>Sewing Related</u>					
Indigo (dye)	2	\$0.25			
(Rose) Madder (dye)	1	\$0.25	<u>Clothing</u>		
Cashmere Vest Pattern	1	\$2.00	Coat, Pants, & Vest	1	\$13.39
Pearl Buttons	1	\$0.13 doz			
Hooks & Eyes	1	\$1.86			
Pins	1	\$0			
Cotton	2	\$1.13 bale			
Thread	4	\$0.04-0.13 spool			

Categories in Table 1 are devoted mostly to cloth, sewing or ready-made clothes. Many of the types of yard goods were originally manufactured abroad and bear the names of countries like Ireland, Switzerland, and Holland, or of cities in foreign countries, like Jeans (Genoa), Calico (Calcutta), or Jaconet (Jagannath, India).<sup>5</sup> These may very

well have been imported from these countries. On the other hand, products like Domestic and some Linens were locally manufactured or hand woven. This included Check, which was a linen weave. Interestingly, French Huguenots brought the culture and manufacture of linen to Ireland in the 17th century, and then



continued their western trek to Virginia with the Scotch-Irish in the following century.<sup>6</sup> The predominance of cloth by the yard (“yard goods”) in Table 1 attests to the fact that most clothing was made at home, but some items, like the Coat, Pants & Vest suit combination, must have been made by the tailors employed by the store. This suit was bought by Alexander Dunlap, the store owner, and was the most expensive item sold during the week, while Calico and Domestic cloths were the cheapest fabrics and the most in demand. Also of interest is the hat category and the fact that Chip Hats dominate the rest in number of sales. In fact, most buyers bought two. A Chip Hat has been defined as a hat or bonnet woven of thin strips of wood or palm fiber and this product had been around since colonial times.<sup>7</sup> This item could have been made locally and was very inexpensive.

Table 2, which covers all non-cloth or clothing-related items, begins with Patent Medicines which were popular at the time and must have been bought by tourists at the Red Sulphur Springs as well as locals.<sup>8</sup> The Vermifuge was to get rid of worms which was especially a problem for children in the area, while both Castor Oil and Epsom Salts were used as purgatives and were popular at the time. Sanative is defined as conducive to physical and spiritual health so was a general term. Bateman’s Pectoral Drops was for disorders of the chest and included an opium solution. Jaynes Pills came in a variety of types for various complaints, including some of the ones listed above, so there is

probably some duplication in the list. The thermometer was bought by a doctor and that is why it was placed in the Medical category. Under Household Articles, the binding of Graham’s Magazine stands out, as it was known for publishing short stories, such as Edgar Allan Poe’s work, as well as critical reviews, articles on music, and information on fashion.<sup>9</sup> It was ordered by Wm. Haynes, Dunlap’s nephew and a salesman in his store. Among the kitchen items, many were made of tin, including the Candle Mold and probably the Coffee Pot, so these could have been produced locally. The category Saddle-Making Supplies was created for purchases of James Prentice, who was identified from the 1850 federal census as a saddler (Table 3). Finally, Services Provided includes the rental of oxen which was paid by Samuel Phillips, a Brick Layer. He must have been working in the area because he visited the store seven times that week.

The Dunlap Store of 1850 was probably like many others at the time in terms of the range of products sold. Even the Mathew’s Trading Post of the 1770s carried a similar range of categories, and many of the same items, but gun-related supplies, common in the Mathew’s Trading Post ledger, are an exception in the A. Dunlap & Co. ledger.<sup>10</sup> Although the Dunlap Store was adjacent to or part of a tourist venue, it still seems to have catered to the local inhabitants. In fact, entries elsewhere in the ledger suggest that locals also provided some of the produce to be sold, such as the butter, eggs, bacon, and sheep provided by Addison Dunlap of the

**Table 2. Non cloth or clothing purchases**

<b>Category/ Product</b>	<b>Sales</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Category/ Product</b>	<b>Sales</b>	<b>Price</b>
<u>Medical Related</u>			<u>Food &amp; Tobacco</u>		
Fahnestock's Vermifuge	2	\$.025 vial	Coffee	12	\$0.16 1/2 lb
Hair Restorer	1	\$0.50 bottle	Tea	2	\$2.00 lb
Castor Oil	1	\$0.25 bottle	Salt	2	?
Sanative Pills	1	\$0.25 box	Sugar	1	\$0.2 loaf
Jayne's Pills	1	\$0.25 box	Bacon	1	?
Epsom Salts	1	\$0.25 box	Eggs	1	\$0.06 1/2 doz
Bateman's Drops	1	\$0.19 vial	Chocolate	1	\$0.25
Thermometer	1	\$1.50	Peppermint	1	\$0.12
			Soda (baking?)	1	\$0.25
<u>Household Articles</u>			Tobacco	3	\$0.13
Umbrella	2	\$1.00-1.25			
Comb	3	\$0.20-0.25	<u>Kitchen Related</u>		
Binding Graham's Mag.	1	\$1.25	Coffee Pot	1	\$1.00
Novel	1	\$0.25	Large Pitcher	1	\$0.63
Paper	1	\$0.04	Tin Bucket	2	\$0.38
Cedar Pencil	1	\$0.06	Tin Pan	2	\$0.34
R(ubber) Ball	1	\$0.96	Candle Mold	2	\$0.08
Key Ring	1	\$0.13	Small Tin	1	\$0.06
Tooth Pick	1	\$0.50	Glass Tumbler	1	\$0.10
Broom Spat	1	\$0.06	Borax	1	\$0.10
Grass Bed Cord	1	\$0.38			
			<u>Horse Related</u>		
<u>Tools &amp; Hardware</u>			Blind Bridle	1	\$1.00
Broad Hoe	2	\$0.44	Bridle Bit	1	\$0.13
Short Foot Shovel	1	\$1.00	Whip Thong	1	\$0.50
Iron Plow Mold (Board?)	1	\$1.19			
Nails	1	\$0.08	<u>Saddle-Making Supplies</u>		
Iron	3	\$0.06 1/2 lb	Hog Skins	1	\$3.00
Cast Steel	1	\$0.26 lb?	Red Skins	1	\$0.42
			Straining Web	1	\$1.37
<u>Services Provided</u>			Pricking Teeth	1	\$0.12 1/2 ea
"Keeping "Horse	1	\$0.50 night	Patent bag	1	\$0.50
Rent of 1 Yoke Oxen	1	\$1.15 day	Large Buckles	1	\$0.20 doz

**Table 3. Customers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Visits</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Visits</b>	<b>Profession</b>
Anderson, Henry	1	Visitor	Larew, John M.	2	Farmer
Ashworth, Johh S.	2	Tanner	Larew, Mrs.	1	?
Baber, Hanton	2	Farmer	Lewis, Zebedee	1	Farmer
Baber, Powhatan	1	Farmer	Lively, Levi	1	Farmer
Barton, Willson	1	Farmer	McCartney, James H.	2	Inn Keeper
Beirne, Oliver	1	Farmer	Miller, John	1	?
Brown, Wm.	1	Laborer	Miller, Samuel	1	Farmer
Burke, Dr. Thos. J.	1	Physician	Monroe, James M.	4	Laborer
Callaway, Chistopher	1	Laborer	Nisornon, Joseph (sp?)	1	Visitor
Callaway, Garner	3	Shingle Maker	Pence, David	1	Farmer
Callaway, Joshua	1	?	Phillips, Samuel	7	Brick Layer
Camp, Wm.	1	Farmer	Prentice, James	6	Saddler
Campbell, Thos. S.	1	Owner RSS	Raffner, David S.	1	Visitor
Campbell, Wm. Jr.	1	Taylor	Roach, Isaac	1	Farmer
Campbell, Wm. Sr.	1	Farmer	Saunders, Holeman	1	Farmer
Cottle, Madison	1	Laborer	Seal, James W.	1	Wagon Maker
Cummins, John	1	Farmer	Shanklin, Absolom	2	Farmer
Dunlap, Addison	3	Farmer	Shanklin, Davidson	1	Farmer
Dunlap, Alex	1	Merchant	Shanklin, Rich V.	1	Farmer
Dunn, Madison	1	Farmer	Spencer, Dr. Wm. W.	6	Physician
Eads, Joshua	3	Carpenter	Swinney, David	1	Farmer
Ellison, Isaac J.	2	Farmer	Swinney, Vincent	1	Farmer
Fowler, Dr. Thos	1	Physician	Taylor, Henry	1	Farmer
Francis, John. W.	2	Teacher	Taylor, Moses	1	?
Ganss, Arch	1	Visitor	Thrasher, Robert	2	Farmer
Gartin, Goodall	1	?	Vass, Boswell	1	Farmer
Goodall, Tiny	1	?	Vass, James	1	?
Gwinn, Sam'l	1	?	Vass, Maj. Wm.	2	?
Haynes, Alex D.	2	Merchant	Warrenburg, Wm.	3	Blacksmith
Haynes, Wm.	1	Merchant	Way, Mrs.	1	?
Hutchinson, John M.	3	Carpenter	Woodson, E. W.	1	Baptist Preacher



neighboring Hans Creek valley. Residents made a few food purchases but most of residents must have grown and consumed their own produce; that would be the reason a wider range of produce was not offered in the store. The exceptions would be coffee and tea of course. As for other imported items, they were hauled in from Lynchburg as the ledger shows that Benjamin M. Dunlap and Bartet Pack were paid \$70.56 and \$19.38, respectively, for these services during the period observed. Foreign items would have been shipped up the James River to Richmond, about 100 miles, and then been transported by canal to Lynchburg, 146 miles.<sup>11</sup> Early railroads

were being built at that time but did not reach the Springs area of western Virginia until the 1870s.

To summarize, the Dunlap Store inventory provides a window into 1850, allowing us to see what the average West Virginia farm family required and how the items were obtained by the store management. People were self-sufficient in terms of most food items but certainly required sewing supplies, ranging from cloth to buttons, and a variety of hardware and miscellaneous items. Store patrons also included guests of the Red Sulphur Springs resort, which may have influenced the goods carried.

### Notes

1. The A. Dunlap & Co. Ledger is housed in the Caperton Museum, Union and covers the period June 1, 1849-July 23, 1851, although the earliest and latest pages are damaged and illegible, in part.
2. Stan Cohen, *Historical Springs of the Virginias* (Charleston, West Virginia: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 1991); Moorman, John J, *The Virginia Springs* (Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott and Co, 1859); Reniers, Percival, *The Springs of Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941).
3. William Burke, *The Mineral Springs of Western Virginia* (New York, New York: Willey and Putnum, 1846).
4. For the 1850 federal census of Monroe County VA (now WV), I have used the transcription of Louise Perkins (Signal Mountain, Tennessee: Mountain Press, 1988).
5. Definitions of terms from Richard M. Lederer, Jr, *Colonial American English: A Glossary* (Old Lyme, Connecticut: Verbatim Books, 1985) and the *New Oxford American Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
6. J. C Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish; A Social History* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), 128.
7. Lederer, *Colonial American English*.
8. Wikipedia, "Lots of Patent Medicines, accessed 2020.
9. Wikipedia, "Graham's Magazine," accessed 2020."
10. Fred Ziegler, *The Settlement of the Greater Greenbrier Valley* (Charleston, West Virginia: 35 Star Publishing, 2019).
11. James W. Kirkwood, *Waterway to The West* (Pamphlet produced by Eastern National Parks and Monument Association, 1963).

### **Figure Credits**

Figure 1. Beyer's print of Red Sulphur Springs courtesy of the Greenbrier Historical Society.

# A History of Wilson Turkey Farm (1941-1991)

By Sara Wilson McDonnell, Ann Wilson McClung, and  
Dr. John R. Wilson



**Figure 1. Harvey Wilson with dressed turkeys. The picture appeared in a 1952 article in *Turkey World*.**

If you lived in Greenbrier County in the second half of the 20th Century, you are very likely to have a Thanksgiving memory, or twenty, that involves a Wilson turkey. Our parents, Harvey and Edith Wilson, created Wilson Turkey Farm before they created any of us. They were married in 1938 and spent the rest of their lives in a home they built on Valley View Farm, about three miles west of Lewisburg. Their children and grandchildren still live there to this day.

Valley View Farm has a storied history dating from the early 1800s. Generations of our family have lived, worked, and raised our families here. Over the years, our aunts and uncles told us incredible tales of hard times and good ones too.

But this isn't that story. This is the story of what happened in 1941 when Harve and Edith traded John Turner, a gentleman from Broadway, Virginia, one Shorthorn heifer for 350 turkey poults. (Poult is the proper term for an adorable baby chick.)



**Figure 2. Sara Wilson collecting turkey eggs in 1952.**

Both Harve and Edith grew up raising cattle. He raised and showed prize winning Shorthorns for many years at fairs and exhibitions throughout the eastern United States. She spent her early years on a dairy, beef and poultry farm near Organ Cave. Turkeys were new to both of them. No matter, within just a decade, Wilson Turkey Farm, the name given to the new undertaking, had sold turkeys to folks in more than 20 different states and was producing over 8,000 turkeys each year (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup>

And it really was a family affair. Harve managed the farming operations that

supplied grains to feed the turkeys. Edith tackled the day-to-day challenges of raising and prepping the turkeys for sale. But they didn't do it alone. They had four children, and we were absorbed in the daily work of raising turkeys before we knew any different. As the years went by, Wilson Turkey Farm expanded to raising breeder hens and toms, selling eggs to hatcheries, caring for poults themselves, sending live turkeys to market, and dressing all types of oven-ready birds (Figure 2).<sup>2</sup>

Our father died in January of 1970 and as if there was nothing to consider, Edith continued in the turkey business with the



help and support of her family and a number of loyal employees. Mary Bryant and Hunter Lephew were fixtures who joined the farm and ultimately the family from the 1940s. During the holiday season, Edith had a cadre of women from the community who assisted her and the whole operation. When we think of the quiet and constant example that our mother set in her dedication and diligence, we can only marvel and know that they truly don't make them like they used to.

### The Life of a Wilson Turkey

In the early years of the 40s and 50s, the day they were hatched, day-old chicks moved into 10-by-12-foot colony-style



**Figure 3. Edith Wilson with hundreds of day-old turkey poults in 1986.**

brooder houses. Since hatchlings can't regulate their own body temperature, the little guys need to be near heaters for warmth. We used both electric and wood heaters on our farm. As the endeavor grew, in the early 1950s, our parents built a large, concrete block building that could house five pens of 500 baby chicks each (Figure 3). Over the first eight weeks of their lives, the pens were gradually enlarged until the eight-week-olds got the run of the entire building (Figure 4).

After many years of producing eggs to sell to hatcheries as well as producing turkeys for the market, it became more economic to just focus on raising turkeys for market. By 1970, the Broad Breasted Bronze turkeys



**Figure 4. Edith Wilson feeding six-week-old turkeys in 1968.**

had given way to the Beltsville Whites, and each year, once in May and again in July, around 3,000 new poults would arrive. All of the sudden we had thousands of new playthings.

After getting them settled in their new home, our first major job of the season was to “desnood” the little guys. This meant each bird’s tiny snood, or protuberance just above the turkey’s bill, had to be manually pinched off by hand. As the snood grows, it becomes fleshy and blood-filled and is a target for the turkeys’ aggressive picking and fighting. Desnooding the chicks helped to prevent injury. It was a sight to see Edith or Mary Bryant whirl through hundreds of turkey poults without even pausing for a break. As children, we were much slower, but still loved being part of the process.

While pecking for food seems like a great use of a beak, it turns out pecking your neighboring bird is more fun, but clearly less ideal. The solution: The Debeaker. Yes, that’s a thing. We would spend an entire day when they were three to four weeks old, catching each and every bird, holding its beak up to a hot blade and removing the sharp pointy end. Problem solved! But boy were those hot days in the 80-degree turkey house.

### Time for an Adventure

Once they reached eight weeks old, the teenage birds were ready to head outside. To keep them healthy, they all got vaccinated for Erysipelas, a nasty bacterial infection first (Figure 5). Yes, that meant thousands of shots. But then, it was time for



**Figure 5. Edith Wilson, Mary Bryant and Conrad Mann (a fellow turkey grower from Renick) giving a vaccine to eight-week-old turkeys heading out to the range in 1968.**



their first road trip.

After getting loaded onto a large farm truck, the turkeys were introduced to their new home on the range; a generous fenced-in pasture on Valley View Farm that was full of rich bluegrass (Figure 6). Every few weeks, they grazed all there was to graze and we would rotate them, and their roosts, feeders and water tanks, to new pasture.

Turns out humans aren't the only ones who think turkeys are delicious. Harve and Edith always kept four hound dogs stationed just outside the

fence to ward off the threat of foxes or other predators. Trips out to check on the birds, dogs and general state-of-affairs were part of each day. All of us kids learned to drive in the pick-up on our way out to the field with our very patient Mother sitting next to us. Years later, returning the favor to our own children we developed a new appreciation for the good nature and kind spirit of our mother.



**Figure 6. Free-range turkeys with roosts, feeders and watering troughs, 1972.**

Through the years, travelers and locals alike often stopped to marvel at and photograph the thousands of birds grazing on the range. Delmar Robinson, beloved Food Editor of the *Gazette-Mail*, highlighted this fact in a Sunday edition article featuring Edith out on the range: "The flock of hundreds of turkeys at the Wilson farm just west of Lewisburg is a familiar sight to

travelers along U.S. 60."<sup>3</sup>

Happy Holidays (but maybe not for the Turkeys)

After a long happy summer and autumn spent out at pasture, the turkeys had no idea how

much work was in store for all of us. Dressing Season arrived each year with excitement and also some trepidation. The amount we had to do in just a few weeks is hard to overstate (Figure 7).

Although it would have been adorable, we did not make individual little outfits for each turkey. Dressing is the innocuous-sounding euphemism given to killing and cleaning each bird.





**Figure 7. White turkeys ready for dressing pictured outside of small brooder houses and long turkey house, 1980s.**

As trucks and trucks full of birds were brought in from the field, one by one, a turkey would be placed upside down in a metal funnel with its head poking out so that a sharp knife could quickly slit its throat. After the blood drained and it stopped moving, each bird was placed into a scalding vat of water heated to 130 degrees, which loosened its feathers.

At the next station, its head and feet were removed before it was placed in the electric turkey picker machine to dispatch most of its feathers. All the small remaining feathers had to be taken out by hand, a pain-staking task for sure. Next, its cavity was

opened to remove the innards and the neck. The liver, gizzard, heart and neck were saved to be stuffed back in at the end. Our least favorite assignment was cleaning the gizzard. It was a smelly, difficult job to open the gizzard with a knife and separate the lining from the rest of it.

Edith was at the end of the line. She would wash, inspect and quality control each bird before plunging it into a large vat filled with water and blocks of ice. There it would spend the night.

That meant an early wake-up call on those frosty November mornings. Harve was

usually in charge of wake-up duty, because he didn't take no for an answer. We can still remember the sting of the icy cold as we plunged our hands into those vats to retrieve the turkeys and put them into a waiting shopping cart so they could drain. Once dry, each turkey was stuffed with its giblets and sealed in a plastic bag with a vacuum cleaner sucking out all the air. Every turkey was then weighed and sorted and its new home was noted in the order book.

One of the coveted roles was salesperson. After determining the weight of each bird, it had to be marked with the price and the sales tax had to be calculated. As customers arrived, money was collected, stories were shared and of course suggestions were offered on how to cook the perfect Wilson Turkey. Harve and Edith always valued their customers and believed in real service, so many deliveries were made all over the Greenbrier Valley.

And remarkably, every single day of dressing season, the entire team would stop at noon for a bountiful home-cooked meal which Edith prepared and served in her home. Ann reflects: "I learned much more through these experiences than how to raise turkeys. I learned about hard work, organization, adversity. . . , team effort, honesty and especially love. My parents loved the farming way of life. . . Through the shared experiences on the farm, I was nurtured and loved as well as educated in what is truly important in life." <sup>4</sup>

### Is a Turkey just a Turkey? Not if it's a Wilson Turkey

So who bought those thousands of turkeys year after year? Families all over the Greenbrier Valley would drive to the farm after placing their order months earlier to secure the centerpiece of their holiday celebration. But the bigger challenge was preparing enough birds to satisfy the large hotels who came back year after year. The Greenbrier Hotel, at White Sulphur Springs, WV, and the Homestead, at Hot Springs, VA, were long-time customers. These properties sought only the largest, juiciest birds with the plumpest breasts.

Broad-breasted bronze turkeys which weighed at least 30 pounds were a specialty and highly sought after by the hotels. But C. C. Helms, purchasing agent of the Homestead Hotel remarked, "We buy many fully grown turkeys from the Wilsons, but our specialty [here] is broiled young turkey. Our guests assure us there is no dish any place better than one of these young turkeys broiled over charcoal for one of our Sunday night, outdoor dinners during the summer months." <sup>5</sup>

In fact, if you read through Edith's order books, it's a who's who of the Greenbrier Valley; camps from around the area, including Camp Allegheny, Camp Greenbrier and Camp Shaw-Mi-Del-Eca; and grocery stores from Charleston, Hinton, Fayetteville, Beckley and beyond. Local businesses, such as Bill Lewis Motors, Kathy's Farm, Kidd's Truck and Implement

Co., Martin & Jones, Raleigh Hardware, First National Bank in Ronceverte, Shawnee Farms, and Westvaco as well as coal and lumber companies in southern West Virginia, often gave Wilson Turkeys as Christmas gifts to their employees. <sup>6</sup>

In 1966, one of the Wilson bronze toms was featured on the front page of The Charleston Gazette alongside Governor Hulett Smith and Agriculture Commissioner Gus Douglas. George, the 50-lb featured tom, was en route to Chicago to compete in a National Turkey Federation contest for the biggest bird in America. He owed his existence to Illinois Governor Otto Kerner who contended to Governor Smith that no West Virginia turkey could compete with an Illinois bird. In a bid to defend the honor of West Virginia, “Douglas urged turkey grower Harve Wilson of Lewisburg to go all-out to raise a

champion.” At his big press outing before leaving for Chicago, George was made a member of the West Virginia Progress Corps by the Governor (Figure 8).<sup>7</sup> While we don’t remember George winning a trophy in Chicago, the attention was the highlight of the year for our family.

### The Food Revolution

Modern America is awash in packaging and labels announcing free-range, grass-grazed, cageless birds. Wilson Turkey Farm was decades ahead of this trend. As Edith proclaimed in 1975, “Range raised turkeys are the best.”<sup>8</sup> For us, it was really just about putting the best turkey we could on each and every Thanksgiving table.

However, turkeys can’t survive on grass alone. John remembers the challenge of mixing the turkey’s feed in the proper



Figure 8. George the turkey with Agriculture Commissioner Gus Douglas (left) and Governor Hulett Smith (right) in 1966.





**Figure 9. John and Genevieve Wilson in 1940s with broad-breasted turkey gobbler.**

proportion. As the birds grew through the months, their mix of oats, corn and wheat had to change to keep up with their nutritional needs. He attributes the delicious flavor of a Wilson turkey to the right mix of time on the range and their diet of home-grown wheat and corn (Figure 9). In another nod to a theme in modern agriculture, Harve noted that “turkeys are now helping his beef and dairy herds by improving the quality of pastures on his farm.”<sup>9</sup>

These days, it’s very hard to find small producers who do it all. Even as early as 1977, Edith noted, “There’s more to turkey farming than you might think, and most



**Figure 10. Edith Wilson with (left to right) Genevieve, John, Sara and Ann wearing Wilson Turkey Farm sweatshirts in 1986.**

turkey farmers I know of aren’t in business anymore. But here, we grow our own feed, and dress the turkeys out back. Everything is done by us. There’s no middleman.”<sup>10</sup> Knowing where your food comes from and thanking the folks that farmed it for you is something the world surely needs more of. That our family was part of that tradition for over 50 years is something that fills us with pride and gratitude.

### The Next Generation

From its earliest days, Wilson Turkey Farm was a multi-generational enterprise (Figure 10). To ensure future generations know their history, we captured the memories

and stories of our times together and created a website: <http://www.wilsonturkeyfarm.com>.<sup>11</sup> A favorite highlight and delicious part of the legacy is Edith's recipe for turkey and dressing, often requested by loyal customers, and now preserved on the website.

As Robert Frost reminds us, "Nothing Gold Can Stay." In 1988, at the age of 75, Edith realized it might be time to work out a succession plan. Our sister, Genevieve Friedman, envisioned taking over the business (Figure 11).<sup>12</sup> She spent a few years alongside her mother addressing the challenges of changing regulations, investigating the required equipment upgrades, and attempting to overcome the

general inefficiencies of a small-scale operation. As with so many other farmers in America, they realized it just wasn't feasible anymore to continue operations.

So, in 1991, Edith raised her last crop of Wilson Turkeys. That holiday season, Edith retired from her life's work of 50 years. Truth be told, she kept raising a few dozen turkeys each season for the next few years as she and the family just couldn't imagine a holiday without one. In fact, to this day, when the Wilson family gathers for a holiday, it isn't considered properly celebrated if there isn't a turkey on the table. But it never seems to taste quite like we remember when Edith was in the kitchen.



**Figure 11. Edith Wilson (1913-2006) and Genevieve Wilson Friedman (1941-2013) with white turkeys, 1989.**

### Did you know?

Turkeys don't have teeth! They use their gizzards to grate up what they eat. And gizzards need grit or tiny pieces of granite to do their job digesting everything a turkey eats.

In two years in the late 1970s, The Greenbrier Hotel served 444 turkeys and the Homestead cooked up 415 turkeys. Those birds averaged 30 pounds each and cost between \$.73-.90 a pound.<sup>13</sup>

During the 1950s, Wilson Turkey Farm contracted women prisoners from the West Virginia State Prison for Women at Pence Springs and the Federal Reformatory at Alderson to help with dressing turkeys. Records show that the state prisoners were paid 50 cents an hour.<sup>14</sup> One day, two of the federal women attempted to escape, but they didn't get far. Ann, aged 4, saw which way they headed, and after the alarm was sounded, she pointed everyone in the right direction, and they were quickly returned.

West Virginia has a rich tradition of hunting, but Edith always got a kick out of the men who'd come by hoping to get one of her special bronze turkeys. Since they looked like wild birds, the unlucky hunters could shoot one of the Wilson birds, show it off at home and cover up their poor hunting skills.<sup>15</sup>

Although independent turkey farms gave way to corporate enterprises, turkey raising is still a major business in Greenbrier County. British United Turkeys of America found the Greenbrier Valley an ideal location for the base of their international complex and had over 200 employees locally in 1995.<sup>16</sup> Aviagen acquired B.U.T.A. and today, turkeys still have an important economic impact in the Greenbrier Valley.



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## Figure Credits

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# Life, Death and Doctoring on Second Creek: Based on Newton H. Hogshead's daybook: 1883- 1887

By Toni Ogden

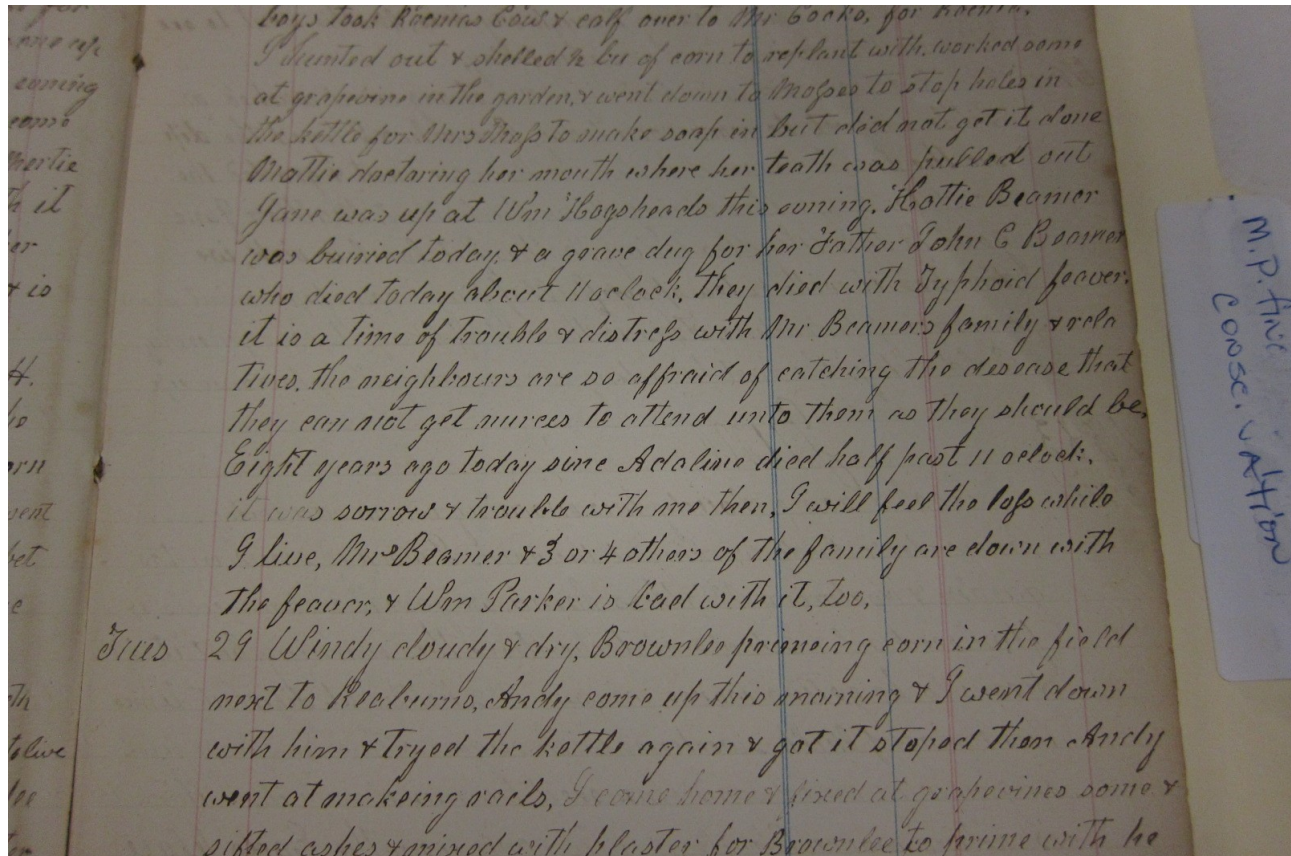


Figure 1. The fine handwriting of Newton Hogshead in his daybook.

The decade of the 1880s marked a transformational time in rural America. Farmers and communities embraced steam power and progressive agricultural practices. Medicines and strategies for dealing with illness, life threatening disease and accidents, however, had hardly changed since the Civil War. Families strived to remain healthy and local country

doctors continuously circulated among them, but germ theory and antibiotics were decades away.

Primary documents help us understand response to accidents, death, chronic disease and epidemics in nineteenth century rural America. The recently discovered daybook of Second Creek

farmer Newton Hogshead (now curated at the Monroe County Historical Society) covers the years 1883 through 1887. His daily entries tracked money earned, spent, and owed by cash and trade of goods or labor, also hours worked by family members and hired hands and what work was done. Additionally, Newton became a diarist reporting news of the neighborhood in terse sentences, especially who died or was sick and what was done for them. His entries become paragraphs as he gets caught up in recording harrowing accidents and the death of his eldest daughter in moving detail. Luckily, his handwriting was easy to read (Figure 1).

Thanks to this medical reporting, a picture of farm economy and health care in this bustling Monroe County community just before the turn of the twentieth century comes into view. Figures 2 and 3 show Hogshead family settlements. In Newton's Day, manual labor was the main and fundamental determinant of comfort and success. Physical health was the hope and prayer; however almost every person encountered in these daybooks is fighting some debility, health crisis or epidemic disease. Maternal death following childbirth among Newton's kith and kin is mentioned at least twice in five years.



**Figure 2. The Original Hogshead Settlement.**



The Hogsheads began their residence in Monroe County in the eighteenth century with corn rights of approximately 9,000 acres of good land divided between Newton's grandfather and his grandfather's brother.<sup>1</sup> Upon the death of their father, Newton and his three brothers divided this land.<sup>2</sup> Each one retained enough property and resources that could be leveraged into cash or barter or labor. The Hogshead clan was progressive: they welcomed the arrival of the threshing steam engine on Second Creek in 1885. They were all members of the Grange and with other farmers became financial investors in the establishment of the Grange's Pickaway store, with its livestock scales and telegraph. In his daybook Newton chronicled the long and heroic effort to get running water uphill into his house. He noted his carefully considered purchases of improved corn seed and apple tree varieties that would arrive by train at Ronceverte or Fort Spring.

Page one of Newton's earliest surviving daybook takes up in the middle of an entry in June of 1883, indicating at least one previous daybook. His household consists of himself and three adult children: son Brownlee, and daughters Mattie & Jane. They form a tight unit with each sibling having their work to do. We learn that Newton has a disability. Brownlee, to whom the farm will descend, is responsible for, among other things, the miles of fencing, care of the horses, mules, cattle & sheep as well as the plowing, harrowing, dragging, drilling and manure hauling. If all goes well, he is also responsible for the

harvesting and safe storage of wheat, corn, oats, rye and millet. His sisters Mattie and Jane wash, iron and mend mountains of clothes, scrub rooms, preserve food and put three meals a day on the table for their family as well as any hired workers and visitors that might stop in to perhaps stay the night. They tend to a small egg and chicken business and churn pounds of butter to sell. They make clothes and knit socks and caps from fabric and yarn purchased or traded at the Hollywood Woolen Mill further up Second Creek, referred to simply as 'the factory'. The dairy cow and chickens were their responsibility and the profit theirs. We get an excellent picture of so-called women's work because Newton nearly always includes Mattie and Jane's activities in his daily entries. The delicate balance of labor and resulting benefit to the Hogshead homestead would easily be thrown into chaos and jeopardy if one of its essential workers were incapacitated. Their very lives depended on meeting the daily needs of animals and crops regardless of weather extremes, illness or injury.

Newton recorded his struggle with the pain and dysfunction of "my Rheumatism". His friend and neighbor J. J. Moran wrote to Newton from various confederate camps during the Civil War, and contents of the letters indicate that Newton was already too disabled to fight when he was in his early thirties; he does not appear on any of the muster roles. We witness the disease's terrible lengthy flares:

December 1885 My  
Rheumatism getting worse, left  
leg & ankle sore & swelled, my  
arms pains me & my hands is  
week.

May 1886 can't get up off my  
chair hardly, cannot walk  
much. My Rheumatism is just  
so as to keep me disabled.

December 1886 My  
Rheumatism keeps about the  
same, hands & feet swelled.

After each setback Newton stabilizes,  
writing, "Rheumatism is as common" or "I  
don't mend, but do not feel any worce."

Relentless farm work in rain, snow and  
freezing temperatures took its toll on

women as well as men. A chronic,  
degenerative condition such as  
Rheumatism was no small matter. Those  
affected suffered from headaches, swollen  
joints and limbs, pains in the chest and  
back, restless sleep, nervousness, weakness  
and a pervasive feeling of illness. Newton's  
own symptoms are consistent with  
Rheumatoid Arthritis - which we  
understand today as an autoimmune  
disease with perhaps genetic  
predisposition.

His everyday battle is well chronicled along  
with sympathetic comments on the  
rheumatic health problems of other family  
members: Cousin Becky has lost the use of  
her hands and can't feed herself; Mattie has  
pain in her chest and back and is very tired;  
brother Benjamin joins Newton in ordering  
patent medicine relief.



**Figure 3. Newton's brother Benjamin  
Hogshead's farmstead.**

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Despite this debility Newton is head of the household and farm. He is the main authority of what to plant, when and where, when to harvest and how to treat sick livestock. Further, he is able to hire men looking for farm work to do his share of the labor. He determinedly gets around the neighborhood and his property on a pair of crutches, sometimes for long distances and seems to have done so for years. He notes getting a new pair in January 1887. His friend and neighbor "J J Moran brought the crutches he made for me over this morning."

Interventions for Rheumatism and other serious complaints were often clumsy and lacking in efficacy. Procedures such as giving a vomit, raising blisters and blood-letting as well as mercury based medications and opioids were the mainstays of treatment as far back as the late 1700s, as were the standard herbal sources.<sup>3</sup> Rhubarb root, Castor oil, Quinine, Arnica and digitalis (Foxglove) were effective as prescribed and in use to this day. Iron in the form of local chelate spring water or in a tincture seems to have been a standard treatment for almost any affliction.

Any well-stocked medicine cabinet would contain 'blue pills' and calomel, both almost pure mercury. These treatments were considered to be effective because of their observable actions. Newton sees as positive the foaming of the mouth, loosening of the teeth or the violent movement of the bowels as evidence of

treatments 'operating'. He confidently self-administered these heavy metals as the need arose or prescribed such to family and neighbors.

Also readily available were the growing number of patent medicines, heavily advertised in newspapers, the forerunner of ubiquitous ads for prescription medicines flooding our electronic media today. Prettily packaged Rheumatic "medicines", such as Warner's Safe Rheumatic Cure, Athlophoros Searles, Jayne's pills, Angeline, Swift's Specific, and Hood's Sarsaparilla, promised cures and pain relief and were mail ordered by Newton with precious dollars. These last resorts of the desperately ill generated the "snake-oil millionaires" who went unregulated until the following century.

Newton's advice was regularly sought on various medical matters.

"Wed 8<sup>th</sup> 1887 Sara Moran cut her foot this evening, sent for me to sew it up. I went & took her some arnica, she had put one stitch in herself, so I did not do anything but give her the arnica."

When Newton tells Dr. Irons that he is treating a high fever in his two-year-old grandson with calomel, the doctor responds that he, Newton, is doing about as the doctor himself would in the situation. This is borne out by a later entry about the boy:



“Homer is not well feaverish & peevish, the Dr said to give him a little dose of calomel tonight if he did not appear to be better.”

A rural community without ready access to hospitals was dependent on traveling physicians like Dr. B. F. Irons whose saddlebags carried powders and pills to continue treatment after he left. There was no telling when the doctor would reappear. The community of Second Creek relied on Doctor Irons who was always on call, always on horseback and seldom found at his home in Pickaway. With many demands on his time Doctor Irons was sometimes faced with a hard choice, calculating which person was in the most danger. Taking meals and staying the night with the family he was treating was routine. In an era before telephones, the doctor might be tracked over many miles following sightings relayed by chance encounters with neighbors met in the road or at the blacksmith's or miller's. Word would be left at each stop to have the doctor come when he was free. Newton notes,

“1887 February We sent for Dr Irons this morning by Thos Vanstavern, he come this evening.”

Any person in a household could be expected to step into a nursing role, sometimes with medicines and doctor instructions, sometimes simply left to their own devices and judgements, rather in the

way that the first nurses during the Civil War were untrained men recovering from wounds or illness. In particularly difficult situations Dr. Irons might send for another physician's assistance. This was especially true for kitchen table surgeries and catastrophic accidents. “Sat 12 Dr Irons wrote a note for Brownlee to go for Dr McDonald, he found Dr McDonald at Mr Hodges near Pickaway. August 1885 Black Joe went after Dr Irons & Irons sent him for Dr Will Patton.”

An arm caught in the new-fangled threshing machine, a man falling face first from atop a haystack onto an upturned pitchfork, an impromptu surgery to relieve a brain abscess, such were the calamities that punctuated an otherwise routine daily existence. Newton gives us a detailed account of a threshing accident.

August 25, 1885 just as we finished thrashing, Samuel Charlton went to roll the belt on the end of the shaft of the wheel at the Engine & got his hand caught in it, & mashed his thumb nail off & broke his left arm in two places, one between his shoulder & elbow & one bone between his elbow & hand, he suffered despartly. We carried him to the house & layed him on the lounge in the poarch & bathed his arm with Arnica & salt & water until the Doctors come they gave him morphene to make him easy.

Then Dr Irons & myself took the lantern & went over to J J Moran's & got him to make splints to sett the arm. Dr Irons got Jim Charlton to go after Dr Rem Campbell while we got the splints made we come back & they padded the splints with cotton until Dr Cambell come... they commenced getting Sam under the influence of Chloroform, they kept him under the influence for about an hour. They got the bones sett during that time & wrapped the splint on with strips of cloth & fixed out some doses of morphene for him & left Mr Comby to attend to him then went to bed about 2 oclock they had wrapped the splints too tight it pained him so much that the morphene would not quiet him & they got up & slacked the bandages some, & he got easy about 4 oclock this morning & slept some.

The next day,

The Doctor said they might take Sam home today, he said they would have to carry him & wanted me to contrive something to carry him on, John Hogshead come this morning & I got him to go with me to the mountain & we got two nice dogwood poles about

7 foot long. J J Moran come over & he helped us to hew & shave the poles. We naled two plank on the 14 in wide that made the bottom 28 ins wide the poles extended about 2 feet on each side to carry by we put a head & foot board on it, the boys thought it ought to have sides & they nailed plank sides to it, there was 8 boys they got their dinners & we carried Sam...& lifted him on some of the quilts...& layed him on the carrier. They carried him along quite easy takeing it 4 at a time, they got home safe.

Typhoid Fever epidemics were cyclical and documented well into the next century in Monroe & Greenbrier.<sup>4</sup> There were social as well as physical impacts from this most feared contagion. The normal flurry of neighborly reciprocal activity and "stopping-in" ground to a halt when Typhoid Fever was in the neighborhood.

"1883 May 28 Hattie Beamer was buried today & a grave dug for her Father, John C Beamer. They died with Typhoid fever. Mrs Beamer & 3 or 4 others of the family are down with the Feaver. the neighbours are so afraid of catching the disease they cannot get nurses to attend unto them as they should."

Newton's entry reflects a feeling of guilt. Three years later, in April of 1886 his daughter Jane shows the signs of the disease. She is 24 years old and vigorous, but the disease will take her out of action even if it does not kill her. The same day Jane's older sister Mattie has a nervous breakdown. Mattie must have realized what was about to happen: she may lose her sister; she will have to do the work of two and she will also be the nurse for the months of care Jane will require if she is to live and recover. One more worry - what if her father or brother contracted the fever? What if she did? As Jane's condition quickly worsens, Mattie rallies and stoically faces her new reality that will include many trips up and down the stairs to Jane's isolated second floor bedroom.

Typhoid Fever's origins were unknown at the time. When Dr. Irons makes his diagnostic house call to the Hogshead's home, he investigates the root cellar under the house for clues to the source of the fever. The culprit is a *Salmonella* bacterium and like Cholera, it is spread through contaminated drinking water or food, or contact with contaminated bodily wastes.<sup>5</sup> It is easy to see how Typhoid could ravage an entire household. The local habit of friends, family and hired help casually stopping in for dinner or staying the night suddenly comes to a halt at the Newton Hogshead house. Mattie, who is 28 years old during this event and already suffers some debility from Rheumatism, is particularly vulnerable as Jane's caregiver. By extension, as the cook, Mattie puts the

rest of the family at risk.

Newton daily records Jane's pulse and temperature. Tracking these measurable markers of disease may have given him some little sense of control over an uncontrollable situation (*pulse 142, temperature 103*). We are able to watch the fever's development and understand why the world's population shrank in horror from this illness, one that is easily controlled today with antibiotics. Jane will lie helpless in her quarantine room, sustained by watered down milk for nine weeks. It is a big day when Jane's pulse and temperature return to normal; her brother carries her downstairs and she is finally able to sit up in a chair; next she must learn to walk again by degrees.

By July, "Jane mending slowly she helps to set the table."

After another couple of weeks,

"Jane helping Mattie as she can."

By December of 1886 Jane finally resumes her heavy chores of washing and churning. In February of 1887 Mattie breaks out in a rash. Dr. Irons pronounces it Erysipelas, a **bacterial skin infection** known in the Middle Ages as St. Anthony's fire. It is a hemolytic streptococcus that manifests as a bright red, tender swollen rash covering the face.<sup>6</sup> Not considered as dangerous as Typhoid Fever, Mattie's condition is not recognized as life threatening until it



becomes shockingly obvious that she is failing.

February 2 Erysipelas coming on Mattie's face.

Thurs 3 Mattie...is not feeling well today has erysipelis on her face has been getting worse all day, she took a dose of quinine tonight and some oxide of zinc on her face.

Frid 4 Brownlee went for Dr Irons for Mattie this morning... her pulse was 144 beats per minute, temperature 102 ½, her face swelled considerably, we had put iodine around her face to keep it from getting into her hair. And give her 20 drops of tincture of iron every 2 hours & one capsule of quinine 5 grains every 6 hours she is restless tonight, the Dr & Brownlee & Jane went to the debate, the Dr went home.

Though Mattie is sick she is not seen to be in imminent danger and the family keeps up its usual activities. Mattie seemed improved the next day.

"Sat 5 Mattie...thinks she is better this morning, the Dr called this morning he thought she was better. We are giving the medicine same as yesterday. The disease is come

in her right ear this evening. She eats a little rice & bread & milk."

But by the following week,

Frid 11 Mattie is not getting better, has a swelling on her neck & a verry quick pulse & hot spells, feels weak.

Sat 12 Cold & windy, thermometer about 20 degrees this morning. We sent for Dr Irons this morning by Thos Vanstavern, he come this evening & examined Mattie, her pulst [sic, pulse] was 150 beats per minute she had no feaver, he said her heart acted verry weak, he left us some digitalis to give her 2 or 3 drops in a little water 3 times a day before or after eating & quinine capsules & 10 drops of tincture of iron 3 times a day before or after eating.

Sund 13 Mattie... does not appear to be getting better, has hot spells & is restless, this is her birthday.

Mattie's condition fluctuates as the days go by.

Thurs 24 The Eryslepias is starting on Mattie's face this evening again, she is takeing

Digitalis & Bromide.

Frid 25 Mattie is worse this morning her face is blistered some. Brownlee going to see Dr Irons to get Medicine for Mattie, he got the tincture of iron, quinine & capsules. Got back about 3 oclock, went & got birch bark to make tea [for Mattie].

Sat 26 Mattie no better today I giving her 15 drops of tincture of iron every 2 hours & capsule of quinine every 8 hours. Her face hurt so she could not rest. I mixed up some flour & lard and put it on her face & she got easy.

Wens 2 sent to Pickaway to get Dr Irons to come & see Mattie, the Dr was not at home & Brownlee left word with his son Oatis for the Dr to come. The Dr come this evening & examined Mattie, said he thought nervesness was the most trouble with her. [!]

Tues 8 The Dr come this evening & examined Mattie (she was bad last night).

More quinine, Bromide & digitalis are administered. Newton and Jane begin to take turns staying up with her at night.

Frid 11 Mattie no better yet has a troublesome cough & is verry weak, heap of flegm in her mouth & throat.

Sat 12 Dr Irons come this morning & found Mattie worce said he wanted another physician for consultation. Mattie's mind became flighty last night, she complained of pain in her head. The Dr examined her puls was 140 per minute. They gave her digitalis every 2 hours & 2 teaspoonfuls of whiskey every 2 hours this evening her puls come down to 112 per minute. Mattie remains verry weak & her mind flighty.

Sund 13 The Dr staid all night give 2 teaspoonful of whiskey every 2 hours, Quinine powder & 2 drops of digitalis every 4 hours. Give 2 teaspoonfulls of Ammonia in wine glass of sweetened water every 4 hours with the whiskey.

Mond 14 Mattie worce commenced vomiting about 5 oclock this morning & vomited 5 times, we burnt corn bread & soaked it in water & gave her a teaspoonful at a time & she quit vomiting. Brownlee went up & got Billy Hogshead to go for Dr Irons he was to have come this morning but was called to see a

sick woman. Billy followed him & they got here at 12 o'clock today. The vomiting relieved Mattie of the phlegm very much but is getting weaker, & her mind worse.

Tues 15 Cold & windy. The Dr staid all night, Mr Simpson [the minister] was all night with us too...giving her whiskey & milk every 2 hours, getting worse about 11 o'clock she called me & I went to her I asked her if she knew me she said yes then she asked for Jane & as soon as she saw Jane she cried. I thought to talk with her some but she did not appear to no anything anymore. I sent a telegram for Dr McDonald this morning & he came at 1 o'clock. They examined Mattie & thought to put a blister on the back of her head as a last resort, they gave her a dose of Ammonia & tried to rous her up but she could not rally so they gave up trying it, they gave her whiskey & milk at 4 o'clock, the Dr said it would be apt to strangle her & we gave it up, she had a great deal of

plegm in her throat & brought it up some so that the Dr could get some of it out. She appeared like she was trying to talk all the time but it but it kept getting weaker & weaker until a few minutes past 4 o'clock she breathed her last.

After a day of burial and family gathering it's back to work, and Newton doesn't mention Mattie again, though he notes that "March has been a time of affliction, sorrow & trouble with us."

The year 1887 is the last Newton wrote in this daybook. He didn't finish out December. It ends as a measles epidemic is ravaging the Second Creek community. It sickened Brownlee, Jane and many of the Hogshead kin. I wondered if Newton had possibly died of the measles.

In the back of this last volume are some loose sheets of lined paper written in thick pencil by Brownlee's son Homer. The year is 1909 and Homer is following in his grandfather's footsteps. It seems obvious he has read through these same daybooks. He writes,

"Jan 9 Newton and I set posts today. Papa has a bad cold. All are at home."



## Notes

1. Jim Comstock, Editor, *West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia, Supplemental Volume 1*, 80, (Richwood, West Virginia, Publisher Jim Comstock, 1974); Herbert Montgomery, Booklet, *Greenbrier Historical Society Homes Tour*, 2013, on file at North House Museum, Lewisburg.
2. Dr. John Montgomery and his son, Herbert, purchased adjoining land in the 1970s which included 220 acres of a 400-acre grant given to John Hogshead/Hogsett. At one time four log structures existed on the property. Genealogical records of the Hogshead/Hogsett family show this family owned 9,000 acres at one time on Second Creek.
3. Renate Wilson, "Introduction, William Bartram and Eighteenth-Century Medicine;" IN William Bartram, *The Search For Nature's Design* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 440-461.
4. *The Greenbrier Independent* (newspaper), January 19, 1911, Volume 45(30).
5. Typhoid and Public Health, Disease Facts, <http://typhoid-and-public-health.leadr.msu.edu/disease-overview/>
6. Wingfield E. Rehmus, MD, MPH. *Erysipelas*, University of British Columbia, <https://www.merckmanuals.com/professional/dermatologic-disorders/bacterial-skin-infections/erysipelas>, last accessed October 21, 2021.

## Figure Credits

1. Courtesy of the author and the Monroe County Historical Society.
- 2 & 3. Courtesy of Friends of Second Creek website, Second Creek Community Photos page [<https://secondcreekwv.tripod.com/id4.html>], last accessed on November 10, 2021.

# Greenbrier County\* Merchant Tokens

By Donald K.  
Clifford



Front of token said to have been used at a club owned by L. L. Slaughter during the 1930s and 1940s, located on Route 92 north of White Sulphur Springs. The Back and more information is at the end of this article.

This article shares metal tokens I have collected for Greenbrier County businesses (\*and at least one from the Monroe County side of Alderson). I shared these on Facebook ("You know you are from Greenbrier County WV if") in the summer of 2021. Kim Arbogast McBride, whose husband Stephen McBride is editor of this journal, saw them and helped me share them here.

I collect merchant tokens from towns all over West Virginia but have a special interest in those from Greenbrier since I was born in Ronceverte and grew up in Lewisburg. Most readers are probably familiar with these tokens (or scrip) as a form of currency issued by coal companies. However, as can be seen from my collection, many other businesses also issued coin tokens. Coal mining companies are not included in this article. Most towns in Greenbrier County had few businesses that used tokens. Ronceverte had the most businesses with a need for tokens, with Rainelle second, perhaps due to the Meadow River Lumber Company and associated stores. Most of these companies stopped issuing coin tokens by the 1950s or early 1960s. My West Virginia merchant token (non-coal

scrip) collection is probably the largest known (about 3500 - 4000 pieces). It can be viewed at the [TOKENCATALOG.COM](http://TOKENCATALOG.COM) website, best viewed by registering first (they require only an email address). Go to the West Virginia listing and type in any of the words on the search line that are on the token you are looking for and that token should come up. Spelling must be correct. Or, you can go to the West Virginia token site and start with the "A" towns and go all the way to the "Z" towns or skip pages using the "jump to page" listing.

Being a token collector, when a token is found, I like to know about when it was used and what it may have been used for. I have copies of R. G. Dun & Company and John M. Bradstreet Company (early credit companies) listings from the 1870s through the early 1950s, along with gazetteers, and city and telephone directories. These have allowed me to find out when businesses were in operation and also tell me what type of business it was. Information from these sources is provided with the photographs.

## Alderson & Fort Spring

\*Token Front is top or left; Token Back is bottom or right

Alderson is a border town, with the main business district in Monroe County where the railroad station was located. North of the Greenbrier River some additional businesses is located as well as the residential area and schools in Greenbrier County.



Hamlet Sulphur Water of Alderson had this small token for purchase of sulphur water. A 1993 brochure for the Alderson Historic Landmarks Week walking tour on file in Archives at the North House Museum puts the business at 401 Railroad Avenue (Monroe County side) and gives this history: "Mr. W. H. Hamlett, grandfather of the present owner, Mrs. Earl Parker, had the well drilled 145 feet into solid rock. Wm. Hamlett supervised the building of the enclosure for the well, consisting of four concrete posts, concrete foundation, a wooden fence with door, and a metal cupola which can be removed for repairs to the well. He invented a special lock for the door which could be opened when a token or penny was inserted into a slot. The tokens were inscribed with the name "W. H. Hamlet Sulphur Water Company."



This Alderson business remains somewhat of a mystery. Help us out Readers!

These five tokens were used by the Echols-Alderson Co., a general store. The 10¢ is not shown but it was made. These tokens were ordered from Ingle System of Dayton, Ohio sometime between 1909 and 1912. Thomas Dixon's 1967 book, *The Rise and Fall of Alderson*, West Virginia tells us that "In January 1913, Mr. William Echols, late of the Reynolds-Pence Company, opened a department store in North Alderson [Greenbrier County] named "The Echols-Alderson Company." It was located in the large building just across from the Alderson Garage (and now houses C. J. Casdorff's Store). The store was once ravaged by fire (1913) and twice by floods (1913 and 1918); but Mr. Echols persevered and operated a highly successful business for many years."



This is a set of tokens from Acme Limestone Company, Fort Spring. (Note the "AL" cutout.) They ordered their tokens from Osborne Register Co., Cincinnati, Ohio in the early 1930s and continued to order replacement tokens until 1951. This token, or scrip, is listed in the coal mine scrip catalogs, but no coal was known to have been mined at this location.



## Frankford, Spring Creek and Falling Springs (Renick)



This is a set of tokens (1¢ through \$1.00) used at Frankford Store Co., Frankford. They were in operation during the early part of the 1900s up into the 1930s. These tokens are difficult to find, but I was told in the early 1980s by another token collector from Greenbrier County that someone who used to work at the store had a bag full of these tokens. To date the bag has not surfaced.

This is a set of Spring Creek Lumber Co. tokens ordered around 1923 from Insurance Credit System of Dayton, Ohio. All 1¢ pieces I have seen and some 5¢ pieces have a hole drilled in them after they were made. They had a 15-mile-long logging railroad and were in operation from around 1923 till about 1932. A few years later they also ordered tokens from the Osborne Register. Most of these tokens are very difficult to find.



Prior to around 1912, Renick was called Falling Springs; sometime in the 1909-1914 era the town changed its name. Here is the only known token, 5 cents, issued by W. F. Knight's Cheap Cash Store, a grocery and confectionery in Falling Springs that was used prior to 1914. This token is the only one known to still exist.

## Lewisburg

These tokens were used by E. L. Bell's Stores of Lewisburg, a general store located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Washington Street & Jefferson Street (Routes 60 & 219) that operated from the very early 1900s. Note some of the tokens show signs of environmental damage due to being in the ground. These tokens were probably made before 1910 to mid 1930s. Bell probably had all denominations made (1¢ through \$1.00).



These 1¢ through 50¢ tokens were used by W. G. Ratliff, who operated a grocery store and confectionery in Lewisburg around 1914, but was out of business by 1918. Ratliff probably also had \$1.00 pieces made, though none have been seen to date. He ordered these tokens sometime between 1909-1912 from Ingle System of Dayton, Ohio, a company that made tokens for thousands of businesses across the U.S. from around 1908 to 1919.





These two tokens (5¢ & 50¢) were used by R. P. Rittenhouse & Co. which operated a dry goods, notions (needles & thread), and clothing store in Lewisburg in the very early 1900s. They were out of business by 1910. They probably had all denominations (1¢ through \$1.00) of tokens made.

**Meadow Bluff.** This token was used by Phipps & Son, Contractors, of Meadow Bluff, ordered in 1925 from Ingle-Schierloh Co. of Dayton, Ohio and shipped to the Phipps & Son office in Meadow Bluff. Phipps & Son may have been a railroad contractor, building railroads to various coal mines in western Greenbrier County. These tokens are scarce, only 100 pieces of each denomination were made. I have not seen the 1¢ or 5¢.



**Rainelle**



G. R. Garner is listed in 1927 as an owner of a pool room in Rainelle. This token could have been used to circumvent gambling laws, as pool players could not be arrested for gambling for tokens.

Here are five tokens from the Meadow River Lumber Company, which ordered these around July 1925 in large quantities, 1,000 to 5,000 pieces of each. However, these tokens are very, very difficult to find. The company must have melted them down, buried them in the ground, or put them into a land fill. Looks like the 10¢ piece has been in the ground. Fewer than a couple pieces of most denominations are known today (other than the 1¢). No \$1.00 have been seen. Meadow River Lumber Co. also owned other stores in Rainelle, including Rainelle Department Store and Rainelle Supply Co.



To the left is a set of tokens from the Rainelle Supply Co., owned by Meadow River Lumber Co, ordered in late 1926 from Ingle-Schierloh Co. of Dayton, Ohio. They are not difficult to find.



This 25¢ token (above) is from Midland Drug Co, which was a division of Rainelle Supply Co. and listed in business directories around 1927. This Midland Drug token is very rare and is the only one known to still exist.

To the right is a set of tokens from Rainelle Department Store, a division of Meadow River Lumber Co., ordered from Osborne Register Co. in the 1930s. They are not difficult to find.





These four tokens are from the Three-In-One business in Rainelle. I am not sure what the primary purpose of this business was, probably a pool room, billiard parlor, or cigar store. No 10¢ tokens have been found. The tokens look to have been used in the late 1940s or 1950s, but may have been used earlier.



This token is from the West Virginia Tea Room, Rainelle. They probably sold something that came in a bottle and when the bottle was purchased the buyer paid an extra 5¢ deposit, the buyer would then return the bottle with this token to receive their 5¢ deposit back. I am not sure when this business was in operation, probably in the late 1940s or 1950s and I do not know what they sold.

### Ronceverte

Clarkson & Tuckwiller from Ronceverte had this token made around 1922. They had a business location in Ronceverte around 1922, but I have not been able to find any mention of a location in Lewisburg. They probably gave them out to customers that had work done on their vehicle. An auto tire was called a "Casing" in the 1920s.



Dougher Deegans Construction Co., Ronceverte, issued these 10¢, 25¢ & \$1.00 tokens. I have not been able to find out when they were in business in Ronceverte. They were probably in the business of building rail lines to coal mining communities. A small number of these tokens were found by a person using a metal detector in the western part of Greenbrier County near Smoot. The 10¢ & 25¢ were dug up there and show signs of being in the ground for awhile. A 5¢ and a 50¢ token are also known. (Editor's note: The partnership was between John E. Dougher and W. E. Deegans. I have inside information on this from John E. Dougher's great granddaughter (and my wife), Kim Arbogast McBride, and W. E. Deegans grandson Skip Deegans of Lewisburg. They agree the company likely was involved in railroad-related work. John E. Dougher lived in Smoot, which explains why the tokens were found there.)



P. P. Ferrell had these tokens made for his business in Ronceverte. He operated a pool room and bowling alley across from the C&O depot around 1910 and later it was listed as a restaurant and soda fountain. He went out of business around the early 1930s. About 1970 a roll of about 50 of these tokens turned up around the Ronceverte area, all were in new condition. No tokens, to my knowledge, have been found that appeared to have been used.





These 5¢ tokens were used by P. A. George & Co. Rexall Store. The drug store was in business for many years during the 1920s and into the 1940s & 50s. P. A. George was also the president of the First National Bank of Ronceverte. I do not know what these tokens were used for. Most of the known tokens have a square hole added to them for some reason after they were put into use, maybe to simplify identification of them as P. A. George tokens. These tokens must have seen a lot of use, because all of them have seen a lot of wear.



This token was used at the Greenbrier Hotel, Ronceverte, probably during the 1910-1920 period. In the early part of the 1900s most hotels had a cigar stand or pool table for guests to use during their overnight stay and this token could have been used for that purpose. This token is the only one known from the Greenbrier Hotel.

These 5¢ & 50¢ tokens were used by P. L. Pierpoint & Co., a general store that operated in Ronceverte around 1900. These tokens were ordered from So. Rubber Stamp Works of Richmond, Virginia. No other denominations are known from P. L. Pierpoint & Co.



W. R. Thomas is listed as a jeweler around 1920 in Ronceverte. This token was made around 1922. It was probably given out to customers that had jewelry repairs done or given to new customers to try to get the new customer to return to the store.

These four tokens (10¢, 25¢, \$1.00, & \$2.50) are from the Townley Bros. Department Store. Townley Bros. started business in the early 1900s and by the 1940s it was called J. J. Townley & Co. These are the only four denominations known from this business, and it is unusual to see a \$2.50 token.



This token was used by Whites Book Store, Ronceverte. I have not found any information on this business, which probably was in business sometime around 1910-1920. This is the only known token from this business.



## White Sulphur Springs and nearby communities



Here are 5¢ & 10¢ tokens from the Bourbon Stave and Lumber Co., which operated in White Sulphur Springs. These tokens are very scarce and a 50¢ token is also known. It was reported that this company operated around 1909, but no reference can be found to confirm that. From the design of the tokens, they look to be from the 1920s or 1930s.

This is the only known token (1¢) from A. E. Huddlestun, White Sulphur Springs. He operated a lumber company from the late 1890s till at least 1914.

Some business directories spell his name A. E. Huddleston.



This is the only known token (10¢) that still exists from the J. C. Moorhead Lumber Co. A 1907 business directory shows J. C. Moorehead (note spelling) as operating a lumber company at Tuckahoe, which is a few miles south of White Sulphur Springs. A 1908 lumber trade journal has Moorhead listed as having a sawmill at Shryock, which is on Route 92 north of White Sulphur Springs. A 1914 business directory has J. C. Morehead (note spelling) operating a sawmill at White Sulphur Springs.



This is a set (5¢ through \$1.00) of tokens used by Lee Slusher, of Anthony. Slusher is listed in 1906 as a general store and lumber company. Tokens made with this reverse design were made prior to 1910. These tokens are very difficult to find.



This 5¢ token is from Henderson Lumber Co., Anthony. It has environmental damage due to being in the ground. Only 1¢ and 5¢ tokens are known. It is not known when Henderson Lumber Co. operated at Anthony, but it must have been for only a brief time.



Back, of L. L. Slaughter token, made of zinc, indicating that it was probably made during

WWII when other metals were in demand for the war effort. See Front at beginning of article.

This set (1¢ through \$1.00) of tokens is from Bath Hardwood Lumber Co. of Neola, which operated around 1918. It is not listed in business directories in 1920. These tokens are not difficult to find, but many have environmental damage. When Bath Hardwood Lumber shut down, they put most of their tokens in sawdust piles at their sawmill. By the time someone found them the acid in the sawdust had damaged the aluminum. The 10¢ & 25¢ tokens are especially corroded.



# An American Dream: Immigration and Business in Cass, West Virginia

By Abi Smith



Figure 1. Cooper's store following flood in East Cass in 1916.

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Immigrant men provided an essential labor force in the first few decades of Cass. The town's population peaked in the early 1920s with around 2,000 people living in and around the community.<sup>1</sup> At that time, the town's population included individuals from the countries of Russia, Italy, Austria, and Syria. These immigrant families established homes and businesses in small communities right outside of the company town, in areas like East Cass.<sup>2</sup> The businesses of immigrant families played an important part of the history of the town of

Cass, but their movements also demonstrate the larger trends of migration in United States history. This paper delves into three stories of immigrant owned stores from East Cass and their larger trends.

Jacob Cooper operated a general merchants store in East Cass known as Cooper's Department Store. Born in the Russian Empire in 1873, Jacob Cooper immigrated to the United States in 1889.<sup>3</sup> He was most likely from the modern country of Poland.<sup>4</sup>



After arriving in Baltimore, Cooper and his wife, Margaret, lived in Washington D.C. where he worked as a grocer. Jacob was naturalized in 1900 and Margaret in 1905.<sup>5</sup> By 1910, however, the family made the decision to move to the town of Cass. The family is listed as living on the east side of the Greenbrier River and operating a dry goods store (Figure 1).<sup>6</sup> Their services included buying wool. Jacob, Margaret and their five children

remained in Cass for over twenty years operating Cooper's Store. Following the decline in the population of Cass, the family began operating a department store in Durbin, WV, a small town just north of Cass.<sup>7</sup> By 1940, Jacob and Margaret returned to Washington, DC where they lived until their deaths in 1943 and 1947.<sup>8</sup> Four of their five children returned to the DC area. One son, Adolph Cooper, remained in Pocahontas County living and working as a lawyer in Marlinton, WV until his death in the 1980s.<sup>9</sup>

The Cooper family's story exemplifies the mass migration of Eastern European Jewish



Figure 2. Hamed Brothers' store in Marlinton.

communities during the late 1800s. In the 1880s, Jewish communities in the modern countries of Poland, Russia, or the Ukraine, were massacred by the Russian government. Nearly three million Jewish people fled to the United States, despite a ban on Jewish emigration from Russia.<sup>10</sup>

Brothers Faris and Joseph Hamed operated Hamed's Underselling Store in East Cass. Joseph and Faris were born in Syria, now Lebanon, in 1881 and 1890, respectively, during the time of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>11</sup> Joseph immigrated to the United States in 1902 with Faris following in 1907.<sup>12</sup> The brothers originally opened a clothing store





**Figure 4. John Reda's store.**

John Reda operated a fruit store in East Cass during the town's peak in the 1920s (Figure 4). Reda was born in 1880 in Italy and immigrated to the United States in 1908. His wife Rosa followed him in 1913 and they moved to Pocahontas County by 1915. Their second child Hubert was born that year in Thornwood, a town in northern Pocahontas County. The 1920 census shows John and Rosa in Cass with their two children.<sup>18</sup> The Reda family remained in Cass until the 1930s before eventually moving to Ohio. John died in 1962 in Akron, Ohio in his eighties.<sup>19</sup>

The Reda family's movements follow a typical pattern of migration from West Virginia. As jobs in the coal and lumber industries of West Virginia began to slow

down, particularly during the Great Depression, waves of people moved to Ohio for industrial jobs. Cities, like Akron, experienced large growths during both World War I and II as families moved to available jobs.<sup>20</sup>

The large immigrant community that developed in Cass into the 1920s began to diminish during the Great Depression. As the lumber industry began to decline, many families moved to find work. The stories of these three businesses showcase the diversity and the bustle of Cass at the town's peak. Although the town no longer reflects the communities it once housed, these families played an important role in the vibrant economic landscape.



## Notes

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12. West Virginia, U.S., Naturalization Records, 1814-1991, Pocahontas County, West Virginia, Declarations of Intention, 1905-1913, v. 1, digital image, Joseph Hamed, 1902, <http://ancestry.com>; 1910 U.S. Census, Edray, Pocahontas County, West Virginia, population schedule, p. 76A, family 124, Farris Hamed, digital image, <http://ancestry.com>.
13. "Hamed's Underselling Store," *Pocahontas Times*, January 18, 1917.
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17. Colleen Sobolov Good, "Home: The Syrian-West Virginian Story a Multimedia Project" (West Virginia University, 2017), 5, [https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010&context=cap\\_theses](https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010&context=cap_theses); ; See also interviews with three prominent Greenbrier Valley merchants of Lebanese heritage, George Aide, Edward Yarid, and Munir Yarid, by Roland Layton in past issues of this journal (Layton, Roland. 2002. "Interview with George Aide." *Journal of the Greenbrier Valley Historical Society* 7, no. 4: 129-140, and Layton, Roland. 2008. "Oral History Project: Interview with Edward and Murir Yarid." *Journal of the Greenbrier Valley Historical Society* 8, no. 4:35-51.
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## Figure Credits

- Figures 1 and 2. Courtesy of Preserving Pocahontas Digital Collection.  
Figure 3. Courtesy of *The Pocahontas Times*.  
Figure 4. Courtesy of West Virginia University Digital Collection.

## About Our Authors



**Stephen Brown** is descended from Nancy Perkins. He is currently writing a book about his family's efforts to hide this connection. His latest novel, *Stealing Renoir*, combines his love of art, history, and murder mysteries.

**Fred Long**, a lifelong resident of Summers County, is the former editor and publisher of the Hinton News, Hinton, West Virginia. He retired in 2015. He is a founding member of the Summers County Historic Landmark Commission and a member of the Greenbrier County Historical Society. He is also the author of numerous publications of an historic nature, including "Summers County in the Civil War," published earlier this year by the Summers County Historical Society, of which he is also a member.



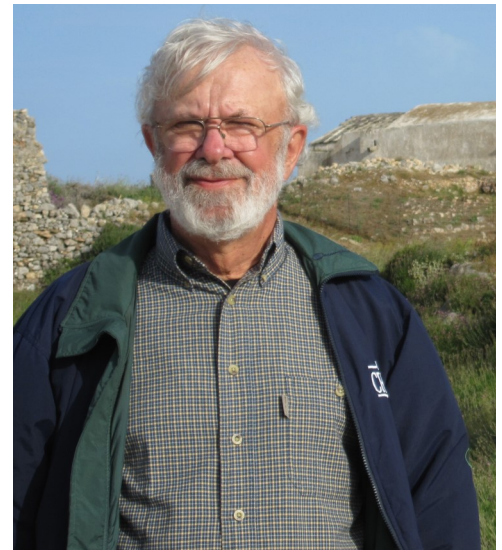
**Mary Montgomery Lindquist** was born and raised in Lewisburg. After a career in mathematics education, she retired as the Fuller E. Callaway Professor from Columbus State University and returned to Lewisburg. She serves on the Greenbrier Historical Society Board and the New River Community and Technical College Foundation. She is a member of the international committee Trends in Mathematics and Science Study, which monitors mathematics assessment.





**Quincy Gray McMichael** was born to curious and creative parents in the western woods of Maine. Love of food and farming brought her to West Virginia, where she has family roots. Quincy works with rare livestock, perennial edibles, fermentation, and permaculture design on her farm, Vernal Vibe Rise, at Renick. The shifting balance within this holistic farm system recently encouraged Quincy to start writing again, enlivening her love of words and ongoing practice of serenity.

**Fred Ziegler** and his wife Barbara retired to Cook's Old Mill in Greenville, Monroe County in 2003. Fred has served as President of the Monroe County Historical Society. He was Chairman of the committee to build a Carriage House adjacent to the Society's Museums in Union, which houses seven full size vehicles. He is the author of a book on *The Settlement of the Greater Greenbrier Valley* and several other titles. His most recent book, *John Campbell Miller, Builder of Fancy Homes in Rural West Virginia*, is forthcoming from 35 Star Publishing, Charleston, WV.



The three **Wilson**s, the three living children of Harve and Edith Wilson, and their families continue to be stewards of Valley View Farm, where Wilson Turkey Farm operated. Both Sara, a retired educator who resides in her parents' home, and Ann, a retired physical therapist, live on the farm and John, a retired veterinarian, lives nearby in Lewisburg.

**Photo: Harvey and Edith Wilson, sitting; standing left to right: Sara, John, Genevieve, Ann, 1958.**





**Toni Ogden** is the Curator and Education Director at the Greenbrier Historical Society. She has a background in fiber-arts education and previously worked in the schools and at Carnegie Hall.

**Donald K. Clifford** was born in Ronceverte to Basil Keffer Clifford and Dorothy Reaser Clifford and grew up in Lewisburg, where his father operated the Firestone tire store until it went out of business in the early 1960s. He left Lewisburg after graduating from Lewisburg High School, and lives in St. Albans, West Virginia. He has donated Greenbrier County coal company tokens (or scrip) to the Greenbrier Historical Society.



**Abigail Smith** is the Archives Associate for the Greenbrier Historical Society. Originally from South Carolina, she moved to West Virginia for two years of service as an AmeriCorps member.

# GH GREENBRIER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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