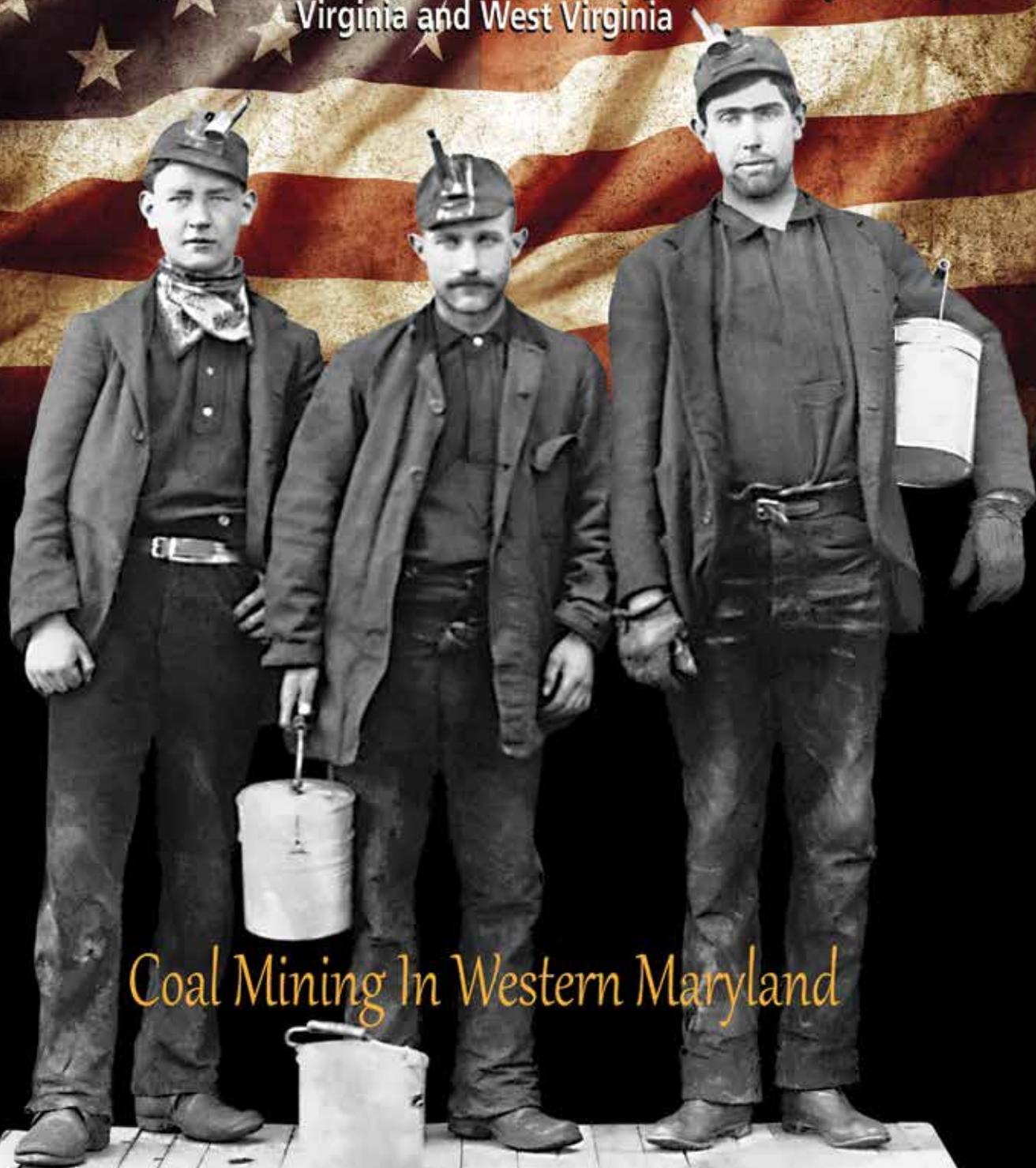


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Coal Mining In Western Maryland

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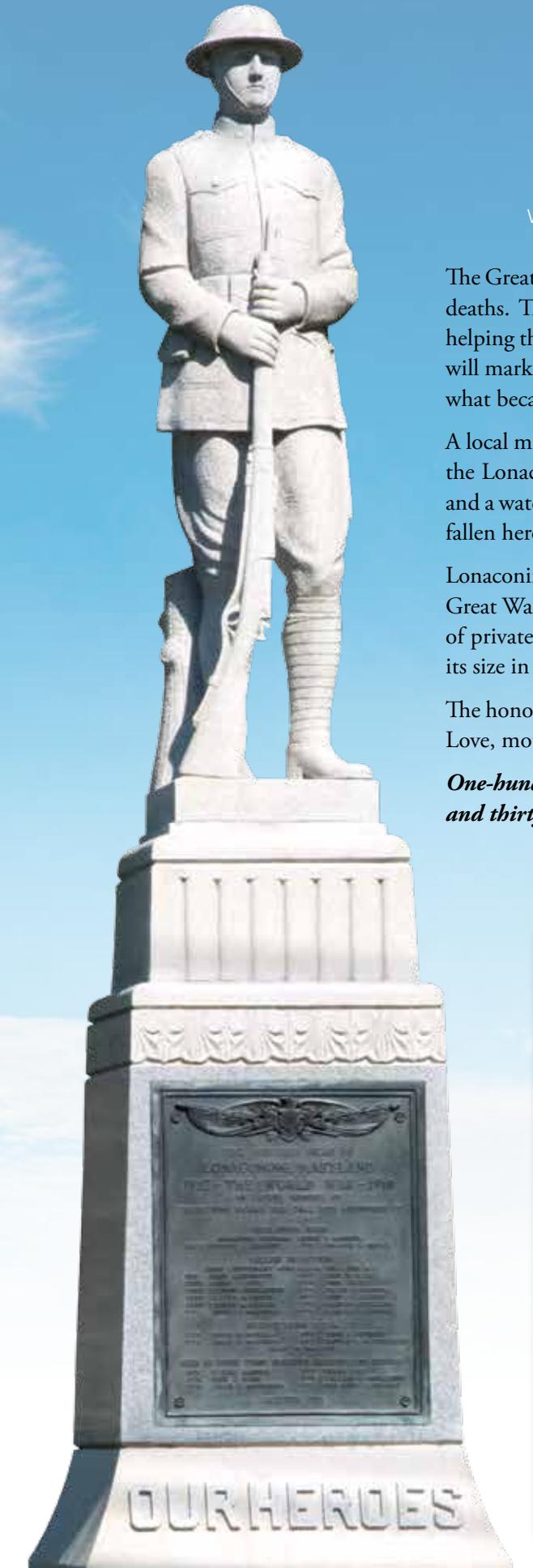


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November 11, 2018
Centennial Anniversary of the end of
World War I

Written by: **Dan Whetzel** Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**

The Great War (1914-1918) was responsible for 18 million civilian and military deaths. The United States entered the war in 1917 and played a key role in helping the Allies defeat Germany and the Central Powers. November 11, 2018 will mark the centennial anniversary of the armistice that halted the fighting of what became known as World War I.

A local memorial of the war is a Doughboy statue located on a knoll in front of the Lonaconing Presbyterian Church. The soldier, depicted in full equipment and a watchful pose, stands over a plaque inscribed with the names of the town's fallen heroes.

Lonaconing provided nearly 650 men in the Army, Navy and Marines during the Great War representing all ranks from Brigadier General McIndoe to hundreds of privates. The town's contribution was greater than any other community of its size in the United States.

The honor of unveiling the statue on May 30, 1925, was awarded to Mrs. Mary Love, mother of the first Lonaconing soldier to fall in battle.

One-hundred and six fallen heroes of World War I were from Allegany County, and thirty-five from Garrett County.

Inscribed names on the statue plaque are as follows:



**THE HONORED DEAD OF
LONACONING, MARYLAND
1917 - THE WORLD WAR - 1918**

DIED OVER SEAS

Brigadier General James F. McIndoe
Capt. Gustave A. Schaidt Pvt. William S. Brown

KILLED IN ACTION

First Lieutenant John Galen Skilling, M.C.
Sgt. John Fairgrieve Pvt. John M. Clark
Corp. James P. Love Pvt. John Frye
Corp. Fleming Donaldson Pvt. Julius F. Richter
Corp. Walter H. Green Pvt. Jesse W. Keifer
Corp. Thomas A. Ricker Pvt. Charles Williams
Pvt. James L. McKenzie Pvt. Charles H. Green

DIED IN CAMP, U.S.A.

Pvt. James M. Ritchie Pvt. John C. Ferrens
Pvt. James N. McKenty Pvt. Thomas E. Fazenbaker
Pvt. James N. McAlpine

DIED AT HOME FROM INJURIES RECEIVED IN SERVICE

Sgt. W. Carl Barnes Pvt. Frank Lee
Pvt. John E. Winn Pvt. William C. Donaldson
Pvt. James S. McCormick Pvt. Benjamin H. Beaman

OUR HEROES

Mountain Discoveries

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Cover: *This photograph was provided by a collector of local coal mining photographs. Although the photograph was not labeled, it appears to be from the late 19th or early 20th century.*



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Fall Fishing at Rocky Gap
by Lance C. Bell

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OUR TOWN THEATRE

Celebrating Community Through the Arts

Written by: **Mary Reisinger**
 Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**
unless otherwise noted



Our Town Theatre
121 E. Center Street, Oakland, MD 21550
Inset: Our Town Theatre founder, Jane Avery

After its earlier uses as a church hall, an armory, and a museum, an unassuming red brick building on Center Street in Oakland, Maryland, now houses Our Town Theatre, a community theater that presents popular play readings and fully staged plays, musical performances, and open mic nights (without microphones because of the excellent acoustic quality of the hall) throughout the year.

This group resulted from the vision of the late Jane Avery (1947-2016), who summered in Garrett County as a child and who moved here as a young adult, teaching children of all ages, but known mostly for her English and theater classes at Southern High School. When Jane decided

to conduct research on community theaters around the country, she did it in her own fashion, taking an extensive road trip with her friend Maxie the Wonder Dog.

Jane had already collaborated with other arts organizations in Garrett County. Through her experience with other local theaters around the United States, she developed an appreciation for the significant role that performing arts groups play in the community. In addition to providing entertainment, Our Town Theatre addresses through performance such issues as domestic violence, bullying, and the sense of being alone that can arise when people confront serious illness. This has led to partnerships with various

groups, including Community Action (seeking to alleviate the burdens of poverty) and the Dove Center (helping those who have experienced domestic violence), as well as with students and area residents of all ages.

Jane admired the Roadside Theatre, a small community theater in Whitesburg, Kentucky, that had enormous success writing about Whitesburg and about other communities it visited. When Jane inquired about the cost of bringing this group to Garrett County, the director suggested she should use their model and do it herself. Her first venture in writing about the people of Garrett County focused on Kitzmiller. Jane persuaded writer Barbara Hurd to engage her Frostburg State University students in this project. They talked with residents of Kitzmiller and created monologues that describe the lives of townspeople. The pieces were performed in Kitzmiller and at Garrett Community College in 1996.

Later, Jane assigned her own students to conduct research projects on figures from Garrett County's history. Students had to choose someone who had lived in Garrett County, contributed to the community, and died more than forty years ago. This effort became *Keepsakes*, a series of pieces about past notables, including Meshach Browning and Priscilla Drane. The fourteen "dear, young, terrified kids," as Jane introduced them, presented their works as the inaugural performance at Our Town Theatre.

It was Jane who found a permanent home for the theater. She used a family bequest and gifts from generous donors to purchase the building; she baked and sold cookies to fund necessities. All sorts of fundraisers have been launched, often with the help of artists like musician Caleb Stine and his group the Brakemen, and actor Stephen Lang, who presented an evening of poetry recitations called "Lang, Alone."

Over the years, Jane strove to make the theater accessible to everyone. She kept the prices low, and she instituted a Barter Camp, where children can come to summer theater camp in exchange for supplies such as paper towels. An ADA compliant entrance ramp and restroom have been installed. The building itself has been maintained and improved; it is now a versatile and comfortable space for various events such as coffeehouses, cafes, workshops, recitals, and meetings, in addition to the season's performances.

The lifeblood and major mission of Our Town Theatre remains theatrical performance. Because the theater was named for the famous Thornton Wilder play *Our Town*, the subject of Jane's master's thesis, the play is performed every ten years; it will next appear in 2020. Other offerings have included Jane's own work, *Ghost Walks*, and other pieces based on local history; family and community oriented pieces such as the Sanders Family plays and *Quilters*; plays that challenge assumptions such as *Twilight of the Golds*; beloved favorites such as *The Importance of Being Earnest*; and works of local students and playwrights, including



PHOTOS COURTESY OUR TOWN THEATRE



Scenes from two 2018 Our Town Theatre plays: *Silent Sky* (top and bottom right) and *The Dining Room* (bottom left).

recent readings of plays by A.J. De Lauder and Barry Weinberg. The first "main stage" show performed in 1998 at Our Town Theatre was *The Dining Room*. This play was offered again in 2018, with some of the same cast members, during the celebration of the theater's twentieth anniversary.

In 2001, the board began planning for a space that would allow them to more easily create and store sets, props, and costumes. To this end, they purchased a nearby property

and constructed a building that would meet their needs. Today, The Backstage — containing the costume, scene, and prop shops — is open to the public a few hours most Wednesdays. The staff will help you rent a costume at the bargain rate of \$5 for two weeks.

Near the Backstage building is the Peter Pan Garden, with a memorial wall, planned by Jane Avery to honor the young people of Garrett County who passed away “before their time.” This seems especially appropriate for a theater named after a play that examines life from the point of view of a young person who died much too soon.

From the beginning, the theater has been the work of many individuals, and since Jane Avery’s death, dedicated members of the group have continued the mission to be a cornerstone of the community. Artistic Director Mikey Virts, President Emily Elmlinger, Vice President Liz Gilbert, and others have ably led the effort to celebrate Our Town Theatre’s twentieth anniversary. A review of the activities of these years confirms that thousands of people have participated as actors, workers, and audience members. Mikey Virts observes that “magic happens here.” Emily Elmlinger adds, “Lives have been transformed by this place.”

In July 2018, a gala, complete with a New Orleans style musical funeral procession, was held to rejoice at the burning of the mortgage on the Backstage building. August saw another set of young campers bartering for some theater experience, led by Jennifer Virts, Garrett County’s Teacher of the Year. Open Mic nights have continued on the third Thursday of each month when no play rehearsals are in progress.

New projects are underway for the fall. Look for readings of new works; a collection of perspectives on cancer called *Reclaiming Voices*; the premier of a play written by school children in Williamsburg, Virginia; a musical, *She Loves Me*; Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*; and other offerings.

This local gem is run entirely by volunteers, and new hands are always welcome. If you can, give some time to tend the garden, serve on the board, lend a hand with sewing or building, or work with publicity or book-keeping. Or make a financial gift. Of course, the most important thing to any theater is its audience, so check the website to see what theatrical treats are in store, and plan to attend.



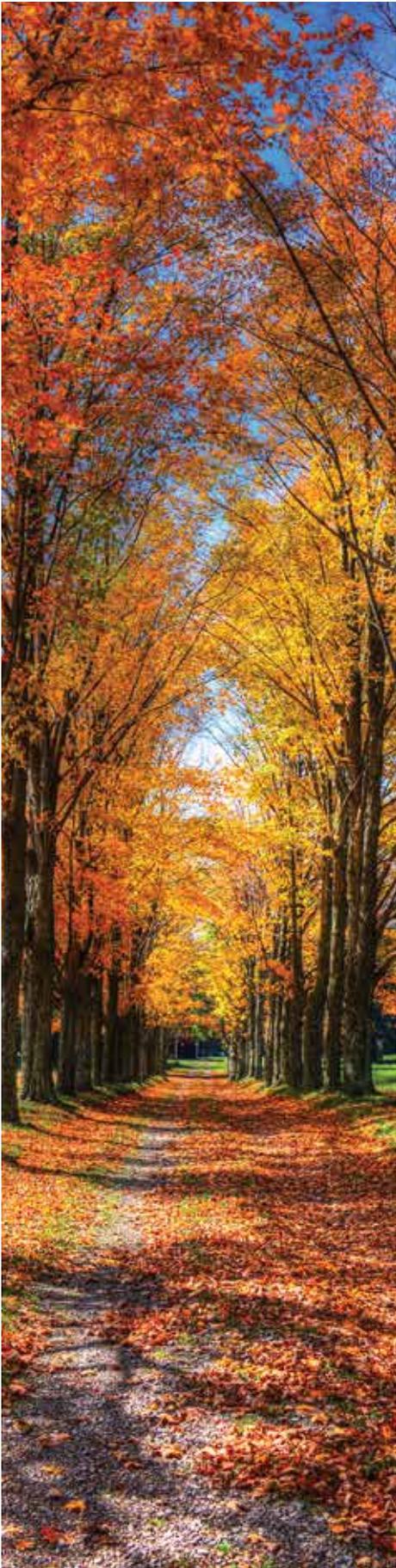
The Backstage, containing the Costume Shop, Prop Shop and Scene Shop, is open to the public a few hours most Wednesdays for costume rentals.

Our Town Theatre

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<https://www.ourtowntheatre.org>

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UNDERGROUND COAL MINING

In Western Maryland

Written by: **Dan Whetzel**



PHOTO COURTESY FROSTBURG MUSEUM

*Oh come all you young fellers so young and so fine
Seek not your fortune in a dark dreary mine
It'll form as a habit and seep in your soul
Till the stream of your blood runs as back as the coal*
— Merle Travis

The Early Days

Western Maryland coal miners worked in the Appalachian Coal Field, part of an enormous coal bed over 900 miles in length and larger than all of England. The area within the coal field known as Georges Creek is located in Western Maryland and between two parallel mountains, called Dans and Big Savage. It was in the 100 square mile valley and the upper reaches of the Potomac River that thousands of miners toiled to earn a living. The coal mining story of Western Maryland is one of sacrifice, hard work, determination, and inspiration that began more than two centuries ago.

A precise date and location for the first coal mine in western Maryland has not been established, but it would be reasonable to speculate that explorers and early settlers along Georges Creek, Jennings Run, and



The open-flame, oil wick cap lamp was commonly used by Georges Creek miners from the 1860s to 1920s and could be purchased or made at home. The lamps resembled a small kettle and contained a mixture of paraffin wax and mineral oil that soaked into a wick. This style lamp, commonly called a "Sunshine Lamp," produced a sputtering and dim light.

Frostburg resident Frederick Zais manufactured wick lamps in his tinsmith shop in Frostburg, Maryland, starting in the 1870s.

His sons carried on the production until carbide lamps became favored by miners.

The lamp above was owned by Earl Evans, courtesy of his daughter, Leona Shaffer. Photo by Lance Bell

the upper Potomac River happened upon exposed seams of coal called outcroppings. Extracting the coal for personal use would have been practical and easy.

The outcroppings did not quickly evolve into commercial enterprises because bulk transportation was limited to wagon travel over rough mountain trails. Even though the coal deposits appeared to be unlimited and easy for the taking, transportation limitations caused it to be priced by the 80 pound bushel.

References to coal deposits first appeared in the 18th century with Benjamin Winslow's map (1736) that marked a coal mine near Savage River. Katherine Harvey, author of *The Best Dressed Miners*, summarized additional 18th century letters and maps describing coal deposits in Western Maryland.

In 1789, the first historical reference to a commercial coal mine in Allegany County appeared in a newspaper story. The writer provided a description of coal being prepared for shipment at a location along Wills Creek, just north of Cumberland and later to be identified as the Sheetz farm. Between 1789-1802 the mine supplied coal to a Cumberland glass factory, Hagerstown nail factory, and the United States Army Arsenal in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia.

Other sources, including a reference in *Underground Coal Mining in Western Maryland*, states that historical tradition places the beginning of commercial mining to a location near Frostburg. In a similar way, a Maryland Historical Trust cultural survey conducted in 2001-2003 found that oral traditions relating to the locations of the first mines along Georges Creek remain valued and honored by residents.

Miner's tin lunch pail (shown closed and in sections). The bottom of the bucket was for tea and the top of the upper section was a compartment for sandwiches. Inside the coal mines the temperature never varied, so the temperature that the food was as it was brought to the mines stayed the same temperature.



This lunch pail, circa 1902, can be viewed at the Frostburg Museum, 50 East Main Street, Frostburg, Maryland. It belonged to Edgar Michaels (1892–1962). Photo by Lance Bell



The open-flame carbide lamp was developed in the late 19th century and used by the early 1900s. The lamp contained an upper chamber that was filled with water and a lower chamber filled with carbide. A drip valve on the top controlled the flow of water into the lower chamber.

As the water dripped onto the carbide, a gas-acetylene was produced that burned with a bright white flame. The open flame system could be dangerous in underground mines where gases accumulated. Many mining disasters were attributed to the igniting of gas by open-flame lamps.

The carbide lamp was replaced by battery operated lights that are still in use today.

Building the National Highway near Eckhart (1814-1815) was a boom to the infant coal industry because it led to new discoveries and provided a paved surface to Cumberland. It was near Eckhart and the headwaters of Jennings Run that commercial mining became viable in Allegany County. Vagel Keller, historian, noted that in 1829, 14 of the 15 recorded coal mines were located at those locations. The historical record supplements Mr. Keller's conclusion.

The Hughes map, dated to around 1836 and recently uncovered in the British Museum, identifies the locations of the Hoyes, Eckhart, and Porter mines at Eckhart. During the same year an accompanying report to stockholders of the Maryland Mining Company identified the names of additional coal mines that were operating in the Eckhart area.

The National Highway increased the coal trade but did not provide a satisfactory solution for bulk transportation of the commodity to markets east of Cumberland; wagon travel caused the price of coal to increase significantly with each successive stop along the way. The early alternative



Above: Loaded cars in Potomac Hollow, to be taken to railroad siding in Barton, Maryland.

Photo courtesy of Jack Ayers

Left: From 1850 until about 1915, miner's headgear generally consisted of cloth or canvas hats with leather brims and lamp brackets. Caps protected the miner's eyes from smoke or soot and their head from dust, but its main use was as a mount for their lamps.

The Flexo Band Cool Cap (right) was distributed by the Portable Lamp & Equipment Company of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, during the 20th century. This cap is made of reinforced leather with a dome comprised of upstanding ribs allowing for protection and ventilation.

A leather and metal lamp bracket could have held an oil-wick (Sunshine) lamp or a carbide lamp.

Both of these caps can be viewed at the Frostburg Museum, 50 East Main Street, Frostburg, Maryland. Photo by Lance Bell

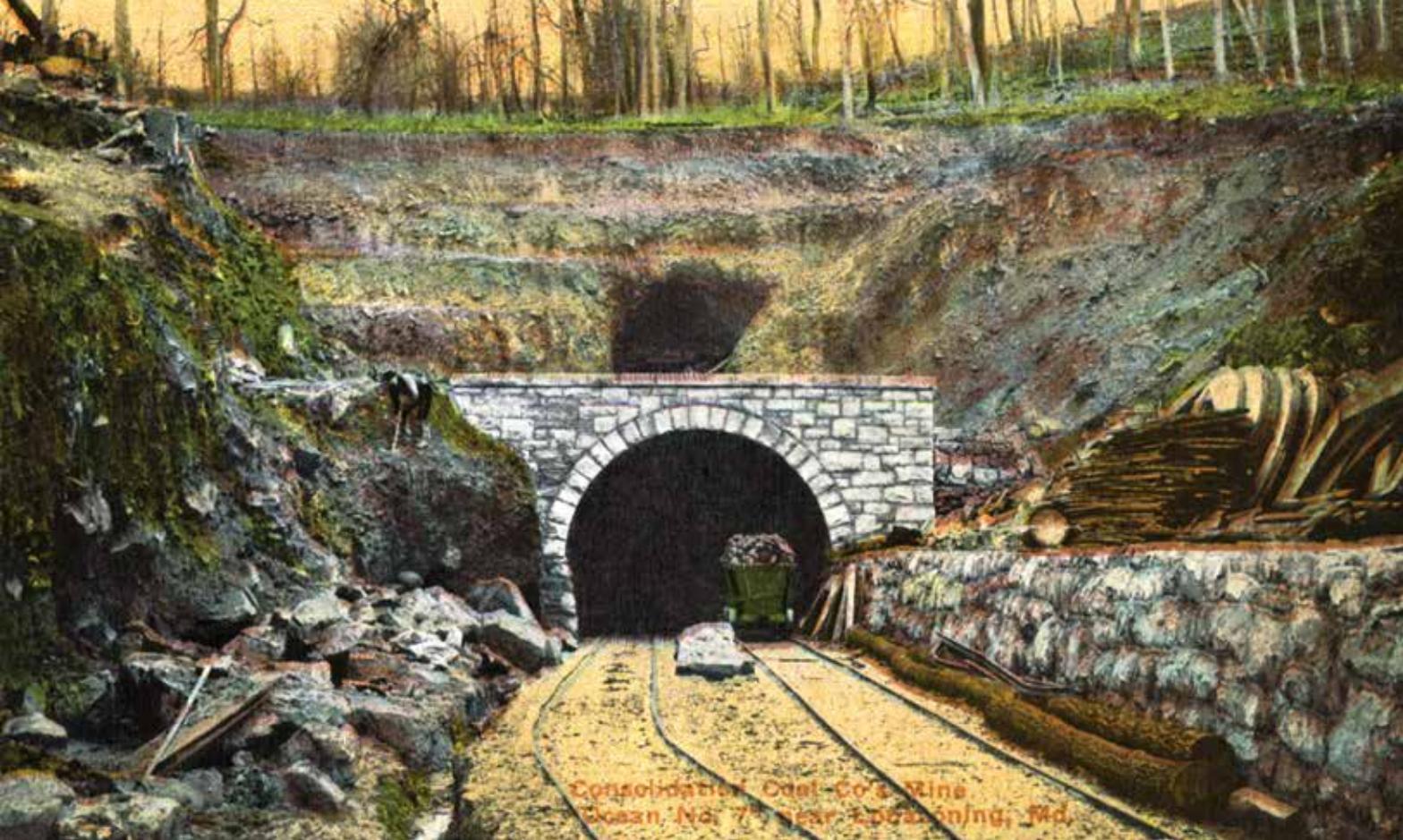
mode of bulk transport proved to be a risky business that is sometimes lost in the coal mining story.

Boatmen assumed the vital job of delivering coal to towns along the Potomac River and the terminus in Georgetown. Prior to 1842, the commodity was often delivered by wagon and stockpiled in Cumberland where shippers awaited high water in the Potomac River. Crudely built 80-foot boats, constructed by local lumbermen, were loaded with 60-70 tons of coal. Small fleets anchored in nearby Wills Creek created an event for residents who anticipated the launches into the nearby Potomac River. Similar launches were common farther upstream, particularly near Westernport.

Despite the best efforts of the four man crews to maneuver the flat boats, they were no match for the river's rocky bottom. Reports described that even casual contact with obstacles caused the crafts to break apart. Crew members fortunate enough to conclude the journey sold their boats for scrap lumber and walked home. Dependence on

wagons and dangerous boats meant the coal industry could not realize its full potential.

Commercial coal mining reached a mile stone in 1829 when the Maryland Mining Company was incorporated by the state of Maryland, the first such act in the region. The Eckhart landowners were permitted to live on the property as tenant farmers, while the new company assumed responsibility for coal production. Following the initial



charter locally controlled and family owned mines increasingly gave way to corporations that were able to purchase considerable amounts of real estate. Between 1828 and 1848, twenty-eight additional coal companies received charters from the state.

The three earliest company-owned towns in Allegheny County, Eckhart, Lonaconing, and Mount Savage,* were originally fashioned after towns in England where many necessities of life had to be provided by the employer. A paternalistic system developed that required employees to live by strict rules governing work schedules and personal behavior; ensuring workers First Amendment rights was not a priority for the owners.

The worst abuses of company towns never prevailed for an extended period of time in Western Maryland, as they did in more remote areas of Appalachia because the mines were located near settlements where a variety of economic opportunities existed. Frostburg and Westernport, towns at the beginning and end of Georges Creek, were the best examples of communities in the coal region that offered diversified business environments.

The largest of the local 19th century coal corporations organized for the purpose of bringing about

**Mount Savage and Lonaconing company towns were involved in iron ore, as well as coal.*

OCEAN MINE NUMBER 7 — One of the most noteworthy coal mines in Georges Creek was Consol's Number 7 at Klondike (Lord). The operation became the largest mine in Maryland during the early 1900s and the largest semi-bituminous mine in the world in 1907. The Consol drift mine tapped the "Big Vein" in 1897 and annually produced more than one million tons for several years until 1911.

Total production from Consol Number 7 amounted to nearly 9½ million tons. A company report on Number 7 (1898) provided an interesting insight into the mine's appearance and how it was being worked soon after opening.

"The entrance is arched with fine cut stone over an opening 12 feet in height and 17 feet in width. Back of the arch is lined with stone and brick masonry for a distance of 250 feet up to the solid coal...here a man of full stature can walk upright and without fear of collision with the roof beam overhead for the coal is full 10 feet thickness.

At about half a mile underground, we come to the 'face' or end of the tunnel. Here in a space about 10 feet wide and 9 feet high the miners are toiling with pick and bar, breaking down the coal...here is no blasting with powder because that shatters the coal and breaks the lumps. The Georges Creek miners have for their tools only picks, shovels, and wedging bars."

It is interesting to note that traditional pick and shovel mining methods were still in use during 1898. In more recent years surface mining has uncovered the marks left behind by "pick and shovel" miners more than a century ago. The workings show remarkably straight walls.

The traditional methods did not last much longer because by 1904 mining machines were in use at Number 7, and black powder blasting techniques became widely used throughout Georges Creek as a means to break coal from the tunnel face.



An important section of the Cumberland & Pennsylvania Railroad along Georges Creek was called Carlos Junction. A branch line from the C&P crossed Georges Creek at Woodland and made its way to Carlos and mine Number 7 at Lord (later called Klondike). The area was of sufficient prominence to require an engine house where locomotives were assigned on a permanent basis. The engine house may be seen behind the track side shanty. The photograph likely dates to the early 1900s. *Photograph from Harry Stegmaier Collection*

an orderly and profitable price structure for coal; cut-throat competition had become common place as the industry grew in the mid-1800s. If the supply of coal could be regulated, the market price would become more favorable to operators and shareholders.

To achieve control of the valley, a New York based corporation with the appropriate name Consolidation Coal Company (1864) acquired 55% of the Georges Creek coal companies, and at a later date, all railroads that serviced the valley.

Consolidation's (commonly called "Consol" by residents) attempt to create a monopoly was never realized because a few large companies and many small ones managed to withstand the challenge. According to Vagel Keller, 338 mines operated in the region between 1876 and 1977, most of them small, limited production businesses.

Consol's strong influence was not only felt by direct attempts to limit competition, but also by the practice of providing favorable shipping rates to its own coal operators. By controlling rail service, Consol placed itself in a dominant but not exclusive position in the Georges Creek valley.

Railroads

The only efficient means of moving coal over long distances is by rail, a means of transportation that became available to Allegany County in 1842

with the Baltimore & Ohio's arrival to an excited citizenry in downtown Cumberland.

The B&O's extension spurred the development of short line railroads to local mines. First was the Mount Savage & Cumberland Railroad (1844) that followed Jennings Run from Mount Savage to the Cumberland Narrows. In quick succession came the Maryland Mining Company's Eckhart Railroad (1846) and the Georges Creek Railroad from Piedmont to Lonaconing (1853). The later chartering of the Cumberland & Pennsylvania Railroad (1864) meant that in addition to coal shipments, regular passenger service was available to Frostburg and Georges Creek residents who sought long distance travel on the B&O Railroad. Consolidation of the various railroads under the C&P flag lead to an unbroken line of rails from Cumberland, through Georges Creek, to Piedmont. It was only at a later date (1888) that the Georges Creek & Cumberland Railroad challenged the C&P's rail monopoly in the valley.

Railroad service to the coal fields generated positive results, as shown on the table below:

Date	Event	Coal Production
1842	B&O Railroad arrived in Cumberland	2,104 tons
1848	Eckhart Branch Railroad	98,032 tons
1853	Georges Creek Railroad to Piedmont	65,862 tons
1864	Cumberland & Pennsylvania Railroad	755,764 tons
1871	Consolidation of railroads under C&P	2,670,338 tons

The Maryland Development Bureau, 1932

Building rail lines to the upper Potomac River valley was a difficult task because of rugged terrain. Henry Gassaway Davis opened the valley with the West Virginia Central & Pittsburg (no “h”) Railroad in the 1880s. Coal mining and timbering operations prospered for the next several decades.

Chesapeake & Ohio Canal

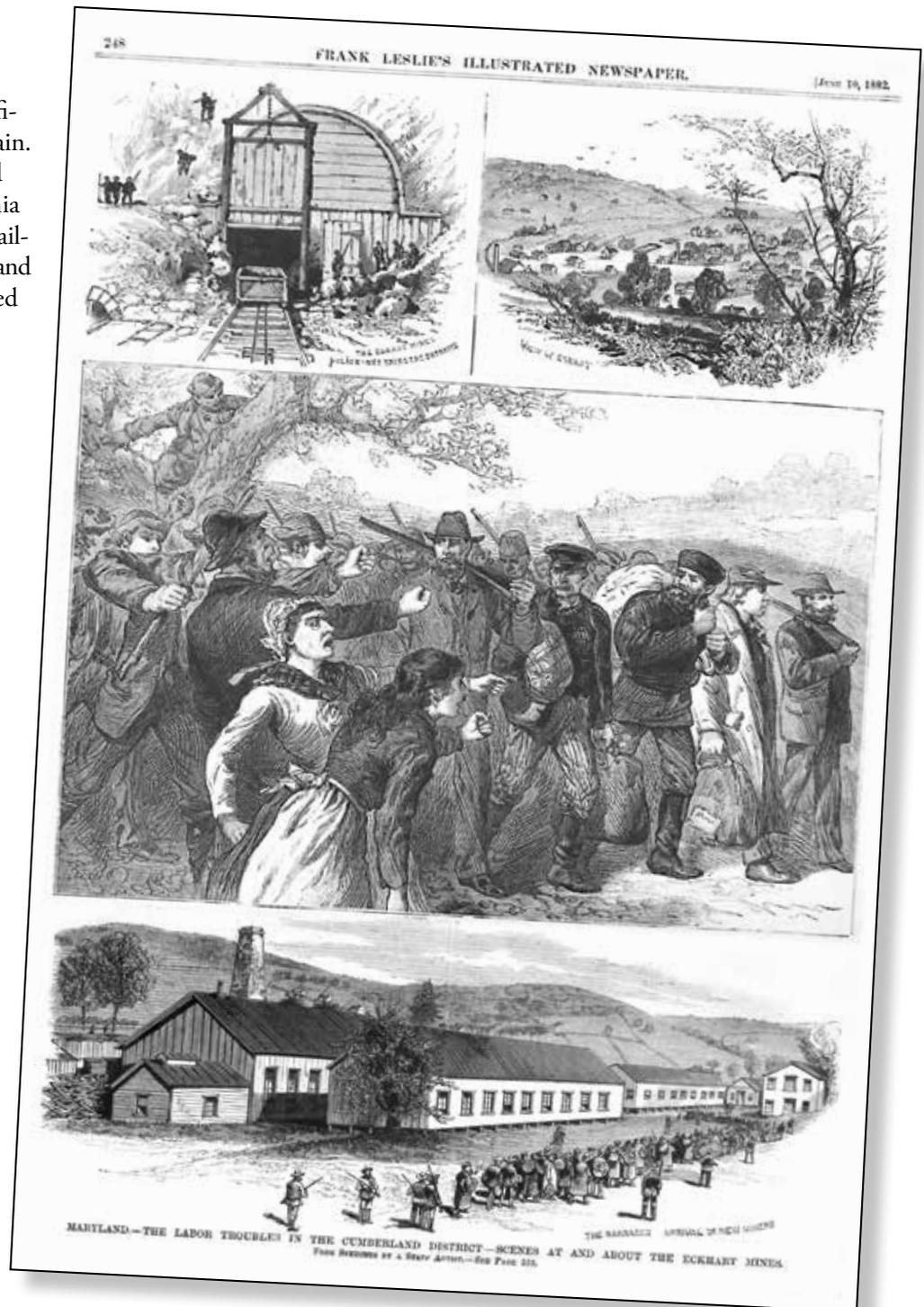
In 1850, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal reached the city of Cumberland and added an additional shipping option for coal operators. The canal, while a major carrier, was nearly unnecessary when completed and struggled financially through the decades. Winter freezes and periodic flooding prevented the boats from competing with the more reliable rail service. Only 25-33% of coal from local coal mines was carried by the canal company. One historian concluded the canal was “almost redundant before ever being completed.”

Labor

The arrival of the B&O Railroad in 1842 spurred economic activity in Allegany County, particularly the timber and coal industries. Census figures show the results of the boom. Between the years 1860-1870, the population of Allegany County increased from 28,348 to 38,536, while the number of miners tripled to 2,712 in 1870. The number of miners continued to increase until peaking at 5,778 in 1910.

Who were the coal miners working in western Maryland?

Census data is helpful in identifying racial and ethnic groups.



THE GREAT STRIKE OF 1882

The Knights of Labor, the first important national labor union, successfully recruited more than 1,700 miners in western Maryland prior to 1880. Union support for improved mining regulations and pay increases prompted a major strike in 1882. The precipitating incident for the strike occurred in March when coal operators announced a pay cut. More than 3,000 local miners refused to work.

Consolidation Coal Company constructed buildings with a six-foot encircling stockade at Eckhart to accommodate recently immigrated workers. The workers who arrived from Austria, Poland, Hungary, Germany and Sweden were hired as strike breakers and were protected by a recently sworn in “state police” force.

Two groups of strike breakers arrived in Eckhart where they were initially greeted by curious onlookers. When the workers entered the mines, however, the situation became more serious, as community members chose sides and some clergymen offered support to the union cause. Additionally, C&P Railroad workers refused to haul coal mined by the immigrants.

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, a national publication, depicted the strike scene at Eckhart with a series of drawings.

Approximately 95% of the population was identified as “white,” a figure that remained relatively constant over the years. Because the majority of workers were listed as white does not mean that African Americans were not employed in local mines. Lestor Clifford, African American resident from Piedmont, recalled his own experiences working in the Georges Creek mines and those of his family and friends, many of whom were employed on the West Virginia side of the Potomac River.

Workers immigration status can be determined by census data. Foreign born workers accounted for 21% of the county’s population at the outbreak of the Civil War, but not all those individuals would have been employed in the mines.

Between 1870 and 1910, the peak of underground coal mining in Allegany County, the immigrant population in the coal mining district arrived primarily from England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland.

In 1910, there were 689 individuals in Allegany County who listed their country of origin as Italy. A few workers also arrived from Russia, Poland, and Yugoslavia. Southern European immigrants continued to arrive in later years, although in much smaller numbers than during the peak years of the late 19th and early 20th centuries when northern European workers arrived in the United States.

As a percentage of the total county population, foreign born residents made up 20% in 1860, but declined to less than 5% in 1920.*

**Allegany County included present day Garrett County until 1872.*



Well into the 20th century, coal miners brought canaries into coal mines as an early-warning signal for toxic gases, such as carbon monoxide or methane. Signs of distress from the bird indicated to the miners that conditions were unsafe.

Carbon monoxide, a by-product of combustion, killed people in poorly ventilated spaces. John Scott Haldane, a Scottish physiologist famous for discoveries of the nature of gasses, noted the fact that when carbon monoxide combined with hemoglobin in the blood, the resulting combination stained the tissues of the poisoned bright red. When coal miners mysteriously started dying, their faces flushed and red, Haldane put two and two together and realized carbon monoxide was the culprit. He suggested a canary be used as a carbon monoxide detector. *Canary cage supplied by Julie Nicholson*

A state sponsored report from 1932 provides some insight into how local immigration figures compared to other coal regions in the United States during the late 1920s to early 1930s. The Maryland Development Bureau stated: “the western Maryland mines... (are) composed almost entirely of native born white persons,” and that such a demographic profile was unique when compared to other coal producing areas in the United States.

A Maryland Historical Trust survey published in 1991 reached the same conclusion regarding the racial and ethnic characteristics of the coal mining districts of the county during the productive years.

Regardless of race and ethnicity, underground coal mining was hard and dangerous work. Many stories relating to the unhealthy conditions have been passed down through the years.



Miners referred to fuses as squibs. When working in the mines, an auger was used to drill a hole into the coal where a charge of black powder would be set. The hole was filled with dirt or coal dust using a tamping rod and needle. When the needle was removed, a small tunnel remained that led back to the explosive. The miner would set the squib at the end of the small tunnel where it would be ignited with a flame from his mining lamp. It acted like a bottle rocket and shot through the tunnel and into the black powder. The explosion shattered the coal into pieces, so it could be loaded by the miner.

The squibs and tin container above, owned by Earl Evans, are courtesy of his daughter, Leona Shaffer. Photo by Lance Bell



- Family members returning from the mines in freezing weather wore trousers that could stand by themselves because there was no escaping the underground water in some sections of the valley.
- Kneeling to undercut and load Little Vein coal was tough work.
- Collapsing tunnels and rooms, called “falls” by the miners, happened quickly and unexpectedly.
- Setting black powder charges was always dangerous.
- “Miner’s asthma” took a toll on workers long before it became known as black lung disease.
- Dangers of the invisible and deadly “black damp” were ever present.
- Runaway mining cars killed and maimed quickly.
- Explosions, caused by the ignition of accumulated gases, took lives in the valley.

Research by Bucky Schriver and Polla Horn, Allegany County residents, have brought to light stories of mining tragedies that occurred over the years. Their efforts through the Coal Miner Memorial Statue Committee resulted in a weekly newspaper column that details the terrible human costs borne by widows and children who suffered the long term consequences of losing the sole wage earner. To date, the researchers have documented 630 coal mining deaths in Allegany County.

Kingsland Mine, Lonaconing, Maryland (above) — Identified in the photo are Charles Buckholtz, John Buckholtz, John Ternet, Bob Hamilton, Charles Buckholtz, Sr., Billy Brown, Will Shriver, and John Shaffer.

Miner’s Check Tags (inset) — The brass tags went by different names depending on location. Miner’s checks, pit checks, and pit tags were also common terms. Miners carried the tags with their number. The tag was placed on loaded cars and sent to the weighmaster where proper credit was recorded.

Child Labor

One of the unpleasant facts surrounding coal mining in the 19th and 20th centuries was child labor. Boys were routinely employed as trappers (regulating ventilation), mule drivers, and miners.

Coal companies are sometimes condemned as prime exploiters of child labor, but the industry was not alone in the practice. A variety of industries routinely hired boys and girls in large numbers. The Klotz Throwing Company, better known as the Lonaconing Silk Mill, is a local example of an early 20th century textile mill whose labor force in Lonaconing, Cumberland, and other locations was predominantly composed of what would today be termed under aged workers. Throughout Europe and the United States children working in factories became commonplace during the Industrial Revolution.





Ocean mine Number 1, located near Midland, MD, was one of the oldest mines along Georges Creek. Operations at the site began prior to the Civil War and continued under several owners until 1960. Ocean Mine Number 1 also played a key part in the water drainage system that was completed in 1909. The Hoffman Tunnel drained water from Number 1 and surrounding areas to a location near Clarysville.

Coal operators permitted children to work under an arrangement called the “half turn,” meaning that a son could accompany his father into the mine where an extra car would be provided for loading. One extra car would significantly increase the father’s wages since he was paid according to the weight of loaded coal car(s). In effect, the son was subcontracted by the father, and the son’s pay was not reflected on the father’s pay envelope. This practice provided economic incentives for the use of child labor during a time when social and economic safety nets did not exist. Mining families typically included many children who required food and clothing.

The miner’s financial needs partially explain why their labor union during the 1880s, called The Knights of Labor, not only accommodated half turning, but listed it as a worker’s entitlement. After 1880, the union insisted on providing the half turn option for miners. Such a demand likely reflected the requests of union members.

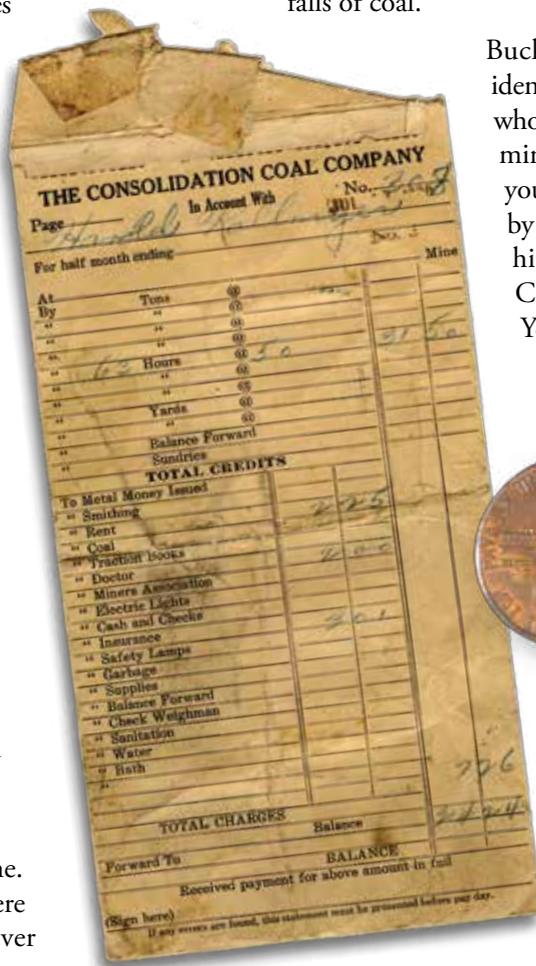
Age limits depended on the coal operator and circumstances at the time. Children between the ages of 9-12 were sometimes hired, but employment over

the age of 12 was established for mine employment, but the law failed to identify what type of work could be performed. Katherine Harvey reported that boys were crushed by mine cars, dragged by mules, burned by explosive, and killed in falls of coal.

the age of 12 was more typical. To complicate matters, the “minimum age” kept changing because it was determined by companies before state regulations started to define the term.

Census data and reports on child labor show that between the years 1880 and 1890, hundreds were working underground. Of the approximately 3,700 miners in Allegany County during 1880, 512 were children. That number fell to 129 in 1902.

The state of Maryland began regulating child labor in coal mines by the early 1900s, although by contemporary standards the measures were weak. In 1902,



Bucky Schriver and Polla Horn have identified 35 children, age 16 or younger who became fatalities in Allegany County mines. Andrew Walker, age 9, was the youngest fatality. Andrew was injured by a fall of top coal while working with his father in the New Lord Mine in Carlos Junction, and died on New Year’s Day, 1900.

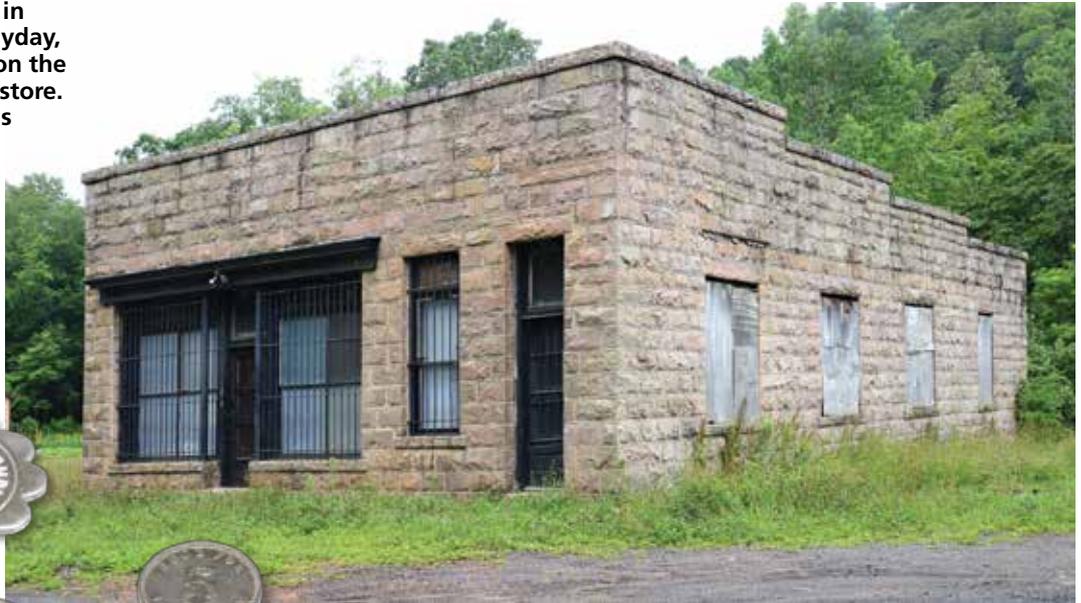


Above: Early mining companies issued scrip tokens for use at their company owned stores as noted by the stamped initial indicating that particular mine. The state of Maryland required that wages be paid in cash in 1880, but scrip continued to be used for credit.

Left: Typical pay envelope from The Consolidation Coal Company.

Wolf Den Company Store in Shallmar, Maryland. On payday, miners would form a line on the right side of the company store. The company store remains remarkably preserved.

The Aberdeen Supply Company scrip (below) was good for 50¢ in merchandise. The Aberdeen Coal Co. operated in Steyer between the years 1917-1922. The small community is located about 2 miles east of Gorman in Garrett County, MD.



For the opportunity to face underground dangers, wages paid to children under the age of 17 ranged between 75 cents per day in 1885 to \$1.06 in 1889. By 1907, the average weekly wage for children under the age of 17 was \$4.46 per week. Those wages would have been for jobs other than loading coal.

Child labor in the mines decreased by the early 1900s and continued to decline because of stronger labor laws, increased educational opportunities at public schools, and a general decline in underground mining.

The Great Decline

Allegany County coal production peaked in 1907 at 5,532,000 tons and steadily declined thereafter. One exception was the increased demand during World War I that caused coal producers to invest in equipment and boost production. Problems quickly surfaced following the war, as prices fell and labor unrest increased.

Reasons for the great decline have been attributed to several factors, including organized labor and the strikes of the 1920s. But the problems associated with the industry were larger than Georges Creek and reflected a fundamental imbalance between coal production and consumption. John L. Lewis, United Mine Workers' president, summarized the issue from a miner's perspective to a US Senate Finance Committee in 1932.

An interesting reminder of coal mining towns and companies is scrip.

In many cases coal mines were located in remote areas where United States currency was difficult to keep on hand. Some early mining companies issued scrip tokens as payment for wages (instead of United States currency). Scrip could be exchanged at the company owned store for food, clothing, housewares, and novelty items. As with any closed economic system, abuses occurred. A few companies required employees to shop at the company store where goods were marked up to excessive levels. Scrip could also be issued in advance of payday, causing negligent miners to be habitually in debt to the company—a basic credit system. Tennessee Ernie Ford's hit song, "Sixteen Tons," serves as a reminder of the miner's plight. Another unfortunate practice occurred when scrip was traded at a steep discount for United States currency, thereby further devaluing miner's wages.

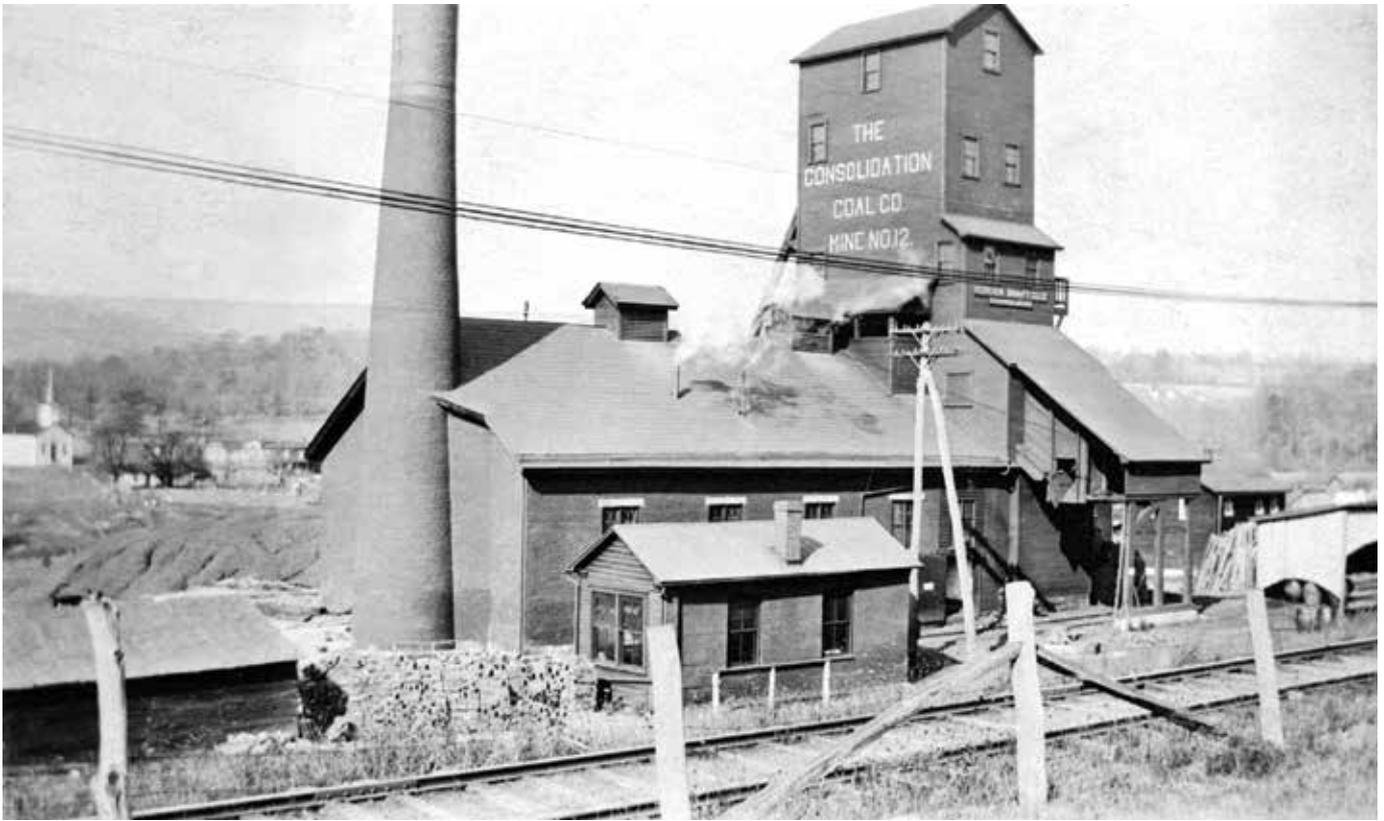
Company stores were officially prohibited by the state in 1868, but indirect means of owning and operating them was typical. In 1880, the state of Maryland required cash payment for wages.

An interesting story, as recorded in the Coal Heritage Trail Cultural Survey, related how youngsters would take a 5 cent denomination token to the Wolf Den Company store in Shallmar for the purchase of one piece of penny candy.

Change had to be provided in United States currency. Several such trips resulted in enough money to attend the movies in the nearby Kitzmiller theatre.

The Shallmar and Kitzmiller scrip went by the interesting names "flicker" and "chinky tink."

Lewis declared the coal industry had destroyed itself through cut throat competition where coal was sold below cost, thereby robbing workers of a fair wage. Lower coal prices did not increase consumption, particularly during the 1930s when the Great Depression caused industrial purchases to fall by 50%. The mine operators invested heavily during World War I, and believed it necessary to maintain production even if it meant selling coal below



The Consolidation Coal Company Mine Number 12 was located in Midlothian, Maryland, and it produced nearly 3 million tons of coal over the decades. The mine was unique because it was a “shaft” mine, meaning the entrance was vertical instead of horizontal like the other coal mines along Georges Creek. Photograph from Harry Stegmaier Collection

what it cost to produce. The net effect was a devastating downward spiral of wages and prices.

Georges Creek operators were caught in the post war/Great Depression trap but also faced a problem more particular to the valley. Most of the “easy coal” had been mined, leaving future operators to deal with more expensive methods of extraction. Increasing expenses during a time of falling prices meant that underground coal mines along Georges Creek would never return to the glory days.

As prices continued to fall, labor unrest increased throughout the Appalachia coal fields.

In an effort to end the unrest, John L. Lewis attempted to negotiate a contract with coal operators. The effort failed, and a strike was declared in 1922. Even though Georges Creek miners remained nonunion, the local miners walked out in support of the strikers.

The issue became more complicated when the UMW workers returned to work, but Georges Creek miners remained on strike. Violence occurred when strike breakers were brought in by Consolidation Coal Company.

The UMW called off support for the local miners who were then blacklisted and unable to return to coal mining.

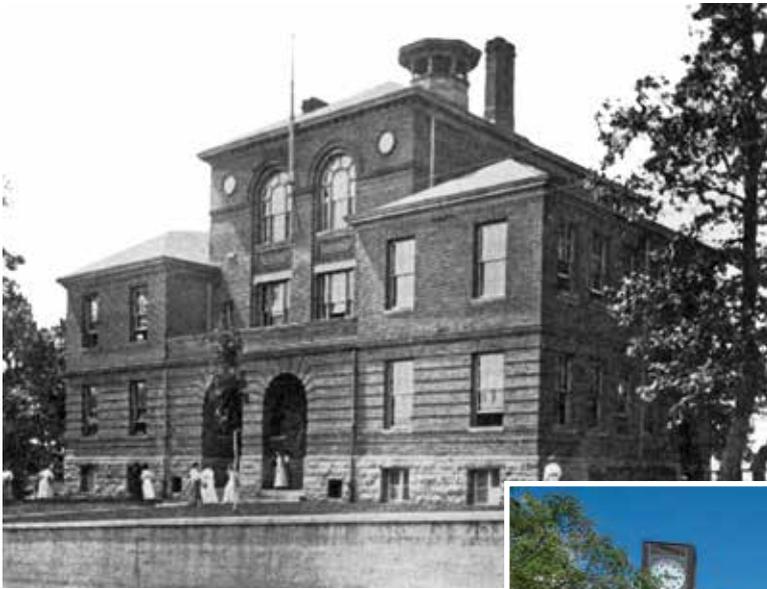
The unrest caused many small mines to close because they did not have the resources to hold out for the eight month siege. Twenty-seven coal operators closed their doors between 1923 and 1930, while the number of coal miners decreased by 1,000 between 1921 and 1930.

As stated by one historian, “General conditions in the coal industry dealt the death blow to the Georges Creek field. The miner’s strike succeeded only in bringing the inevitable end a little sooner.”

A symbolic ending of major underground mining operations occurred in 1944 when Consolidation Coal Company pulled out of Allegany County. Former Consol properties were purchased by the Jenkins family.

As coal production fell, the number of workers engaged in mining collapsed. Following World War II, there were still more than 2,000 men engaged in the industry, but by 1966, only 350 men remained employed. The introduction of surface mining, sometimes called strip mining, started in the 1960s and hastened the end of underground coal mining operations in Allegany County. A few small mines continued to operate, however, into more recent times.

Mines in Garrett County followed a similar pattern with a post-World War I strike and mine closures.



"Old Main," which housed classrooms and a library, was the first campus building at State Normal School No. 2 (left and above).
Photos courtesy Frostburg State University

Legacy

When asked if there was a coal mining culture or legacy, John Grant, Garrett County historian, engineer, and clergyman, quickly responded, "Yes, hard work."

Individual acts of courage were performed everyday by miners who aspired to a better life by working in an occupation where no one became rich—there are no stories of coal miners becoming wealthy by loading one-ton cars. What does live on is the collective spirit of wanting a better life and the willingness to work for it.

Katherine Harvey's excellent analysis of local mining communities highlights that residents wanted more from life than labor wages—they wanted the finer things in life too. Civic clubs, church organizations, patriotic assemblies, sports teams, and educational endeavors were an integral part of the "best dressed miners" culture in Allegany County. James Oppenheim's memorable poem written about the Lawrence textile mill strike speaks for coal miners as well—"Hearts starve as well as bodies; give us bread, but give us roses!"

One example of the coal miner's attitude toward life was their support of Frostburg Normal School, now known as Frostburg State University.

The suggestion for the school came from the editor of the *Frostburg Mining Journal* who penned an open letter in 1898 recommending that State Normal School #2 be built in Frostburg. The idea was not well received, as opposition came from Cumberland residents who felt the county seat was more appropriate for the institution. The state legislature was not warm to the idea either, even though some



State Normal School No. 2, now known as Frostburg State University, continues its pursuit of excellence, a tradition that spans more than a century.
Photo by Lance C. Bell

Frostburg citizens had lobbied for the school. Fortunately, an amendment to a General Appropriations bill made its way through the proceedings.

The amendment provided \$20,000 for the school building but no money to purchase land that would obviously be required. When a site became available, the issue quickly became one of money—how could a sum of \$2,000 be raised?

The coal mining community and civic groups came to the rescue. Miners were asked for contributions, as their work shifts ended—25 cents, 90 cents, and so on was offered. Within two weeks most of the funds were provided to pay for the lot. The names of miners and others who contributed were listed in the *Frostburg Mining Journal* and sealed in the cornerstone of Frostburg Normal School #2 when it was constructed. The local mining community celebrated when the new school opened for students in the fall of 1902.

The Western Maryland coal mining story has been passed down through oral traditions and written history for decades. Most residents of the coal mining areas know of ancestors or friends who made a living in the underground

mines. While pick and shovel mining has passed, the work that went with the job has become legendary and a source of pride for those who followed.

References and Acknowledgements:

Green Glades and Sooty Gob Piles,
Donna Ware.

Cultural Survey of the Coal Heritage Trail,
Dan Whetzel & Mike Lewis

Underground Coal Mining in Western Maryland, Vagel Keller

Above Ground and Below in the Georges Creek Region, Consolidation Coal Company

The Best Dressed Miners, Katherine Harvey

Map Showing the Cumberland & Pennsylvania Railroad, 1938

The Coal Industry of Maryland,
Fairbanks and Hamil

History of Western Maryland, Thomas Scharf
Allegany County—A History,
Wiseman, Stegmaier, Dean & Kershaw

The Devil Is Here in These Hills, James Green

Windows to the Past, Betty Van Newkirk

State of Maryland Annual Mining Reports

Journal of the Alleghenies

The Frostburg Museum

Dan Press

Albert Feldstein

For Additional Information:

For those interested in traditional Appalachian music and coal mining songs, the author recommends the recordings of Hazel Dickens.

The Frostburg Museum, located at 50 East Main Street, features a large display of coal mining artifacts.

For those persons interested in oral histories of Allegany and Garrett County coal miners, see the Coal Heritage Trail Cultural Survey Collection located in the Beall Archives, Ort Library, at Frostburg State University. Photographs and transcribed interviews are available from the two year study. In addition, Frostburg State University has digitized a large collection of coal mining maps of the region. The collection may be viewed online.

Allegany College of Maryland, 12401 Willowbrook Road, Cumberland, has available the first year collection of the Coal Heritage Trail Cultural Survey.

The library at Garrett College, 687 Mosser Road, McHenry, has available oral histories of coal miners under the title “Coal Talk.”

Contemporary Coal Mining

Coal mining continues to be a part of Mountain Maryland’s economy. The latest annual report issued by the state of Maryland shows that two million tons of coal were produced in Allegany and Garrett Counties during 2016. A little more than half of the coal was extracted from underground mining, all in Garrett County. Three-hundred and fifty-nine employees were engaged in coal mining, a total that excludes transportation and supervision workers.

Unlike the early days of the Industrial Revolution when Appalachian operators were the major producers, today the largest coal producing state is in the West—Wyoming’s production easily outpaces the combined total of West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Maryland.

Today’s coal mining methods differ from those used in the 19th century. Charlie Stoner, retired underground coal miner and Red House resident, states that typically there are only 5 men in each section where a “continuous miner” machine works the face of coal. The machine is equipped with a large rotating steel drum and carbide teeth that scrape the coal at a pace of 5 tons per minute; a rate thousands of times faster than traditional methods.

Mr. Stoner notes that old mine workings are still present and must be accounted for in the planning process. Breaching the old workings can be extremely dangerous because they hold water that will be released suddenly and at high pressure.



Above:
This scale model of a Joy “continuous miner” machine was built by Wayne Biser as a gift to Charlie Stoner and his wife, Loretta. One safety feature of the actual machine is a built-in “sniffer” that detects gases in the mine; it automatically shuts down with gas detections.



Charlie Stoner, retired miner, with the “continuous miner” model.

Frostburg Coal Miner Memorial Statue Fund

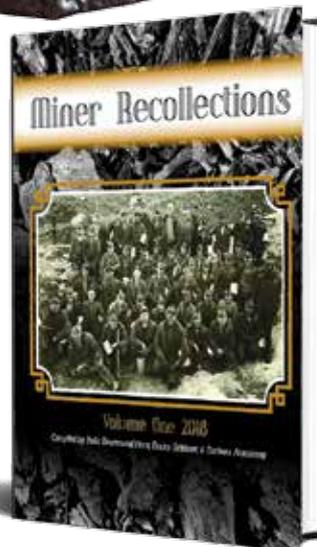
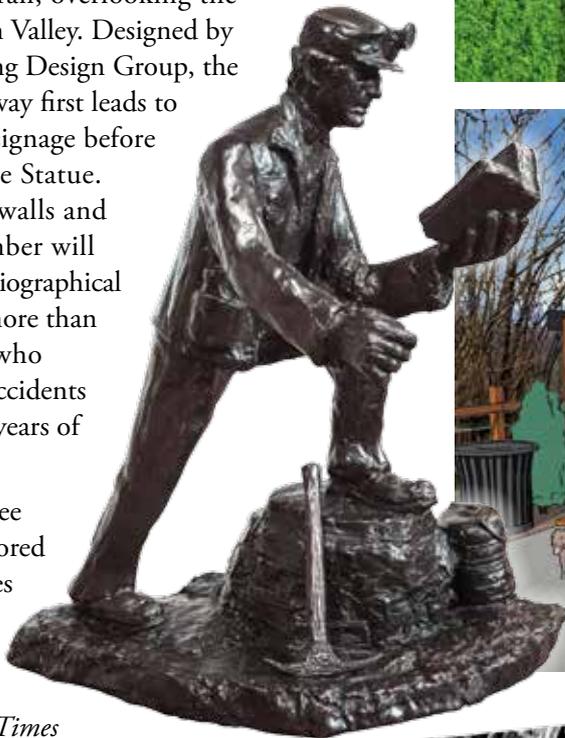
Western Maryland's coal mining heritage has been the focus of the Foundation for Frostburg's Coal Miner Memorial Statue Fund. One of the most noteworthy successes over the past several years has been the commissioning of a life-sized bronze coal miner statue that honors the history of Georges Creek and those residents who labored in the underground mines. The statue is currently on display in the studio of its creator, Alan Cottrill, until completion and delivery to Frostburg.

The statue and landscaped park will be located between Frostburg's C&P Depot and the Allegheny Highlands Trail, overlooking the Jennings Run Valley. Designed by AC Armstrong Design Group, the project walkway first leads to interpretive signage before encircling the Statue. Heightened walls and overhead timber will support the biographical sketches of more than 641 miners who perished in accidents between the years of 1838-2007.

The committee has also authored a weekly series of "Miner Recollections" in the *Cumberland Times*

and *Frostburg Express*. The first 100 stories have been compiled into book form and are available for a \$20.00 donation to the Foundation for Frostburg/CMMSE.

For those wanting to contribute to the completion of the project and preserve western Maryland's coal mining heritage, please make checks payable to the Foundation for Frostburg CMMSE. All contributions are tax deductible and are held by the Foundation for Frostburg.



Tax-deductible donations are gratefully accepted for the

Coal Miner Statue Fund & Park
Miner Recollections Volume One
 book is available for a \$20 donation
 (includes shipping)

For book and donations:

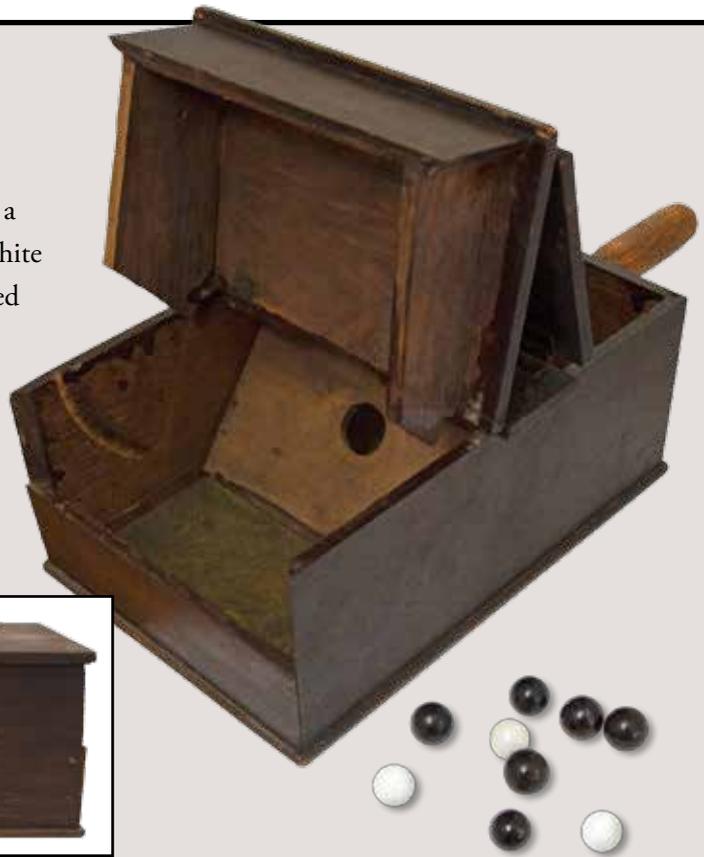
The Foundation for Frostburg CMMSE
P.O. Box 765, Frostburg, MD 21532

The book is available at Armstrong Insurance
 (21 S. Water St., Frostburg, MD 21532)
 from Statue Committee members,
 or by emailing: bucky1015@comcast.net
 or jph68@verizon.net

Union Ballot Box

The ballot box was used to conduct elections at a union coal mine in West Virginia. A black or white marble was dropped through a small hole located in the center partition of the box.

Artifact courtesy of John and Beverly Sturm and Dr. Matt Ravenscroft, Mountain Ridge High School.



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Weather-Proof, Year-Round Fun

Written by: **Mary Reisinger**

Wisp Resort in Garrett County, Maryland, specializes in recreational activities for people of all ages. The large hotel and conference center with yurt village is known for its ski slopes, but it is truly a four-season resort. Space can be rented year-round for various kinds of gatherings, including corporate conferences, workshops, and weddings.

Wisp offers rides on scenic chair lifts and the mountain coaster, canopy tour zip lines, Segway tours, disc golf, downhill mountain biking, whitewater rafting (on the County-owned course managed by Wisp Resort), and gem mining. Wisp also runs the concession at Deep Creek Lake State Park for canoe, kayak, and paddle board rentals. Reservations for many of these activities can be made online.

In September 2017, a new option was added. The staff had become aware of the many escape rooms popping up around the country, including nearby in Morgantown, West Virginia. In fact, some staff members were connoisseurs, traveling to participate in escape games offered elsewhere. The decision was made to incorporate an escape game into the array of activities at Wisp Resort, and the first game was developed.

Escape games challenge a group of people to work together to “escape” the room they’re in and to do it quickly. The first game at Wisp, Race to the Slopes, gives people a role to play; they must complete tasks for their work in the ski shop and find their lost lift ticket in time to get to the lift, which is opening in one hour.

This game proved popular enough that staff members have designed a second game: Detention Breakout. In this scenario, group members are students serving a Saturday morning detention, and the teacher/supervisor has given them one hour to prove they can work together to escape the detention room. If they do, their detention will be considered complete.

To play escape games, it is not necessary to have specialized knowledge or skills; instead, escape games require common sense, intuition, communication, and team work. They can be played successfully by young and old, though children under thirteen must be with an adult. Players work in groups of 6-10 players, and there is a Game Master watching via camera to nudge players when they are having difficulty figuring out clues. The Game Master, who appears on a screen in the room and can type messages to the players, might offer up to three free clues when necessary. Games are rated on their level of difficulty, and the greatest challenge lies in solving the puzzles on time.

Meanwhile, participants can leave the room during the game. There are keys to the doors, and people leave as necessary to use the restroom, take phone calls, etc. However, the clock starts ticking when the game begins, and players are committed to working together to make the great escape before the deadline.

Escape games are effective team-building exercises for employees and members of groups; they are also fun for groups of family and friends.

WisP will schedule escape games any day of the week if people reserve a spot during the prime summer and winter seasons. At other times, the games are usually held on weekends. The cost is \$24 per person. Best of all, this is an activity that can safely be planned no matter what the weather forecast may be.

If you love escape games or are curious to find out what they're like, book a spot online for a Race to the Slopes or a Detention Breakout at WisP Resort.



Win or lose, it's always fun to have a group photo at the end of your Escape Game.

Speeders Ready for Fun!



A speeder (also known as railway motor car, putt-putt, track-maintenance car, crew car, jigger, trike, quad, trolley or inspection car), is a maintenance of way motorized vehicle formerly used on railroads around the world by track inspectors and work crews to move quickly to and from work sites.

Written by: **Dan Whetzel**
Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**



Speeders were spotted along the Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad in August! That's right, speeders. Unlike the highly anticipated sightings of American Bald Eagles along the South Branch of the Potomac River near Romney, WV, these unexpected sightings involved the operators of small track inspection vehicles that were guests of Appalachian Rail Excursions LLC, and the scenic railroad.

The small motor railcars were operated by enthusiasts who traveled from all parts of the country to enjoy camaraderie and scenic views of the South Branch Valley. Two day-trips highlighted the event and created an interest in the hobby and railcars. So, where did these unique vehicles originate and who operates them?

Railroads needed specialized vehicles to assist crews in inspecting and maintaining track, so workers operated small hand pump cars. A motorized version became available by the late 19th century that enabled the vehicles to "speed" on the rails and carry heavier loads. While the cars only traveled at 15 mph, they were faster than hand operated models and welcomed by crews. A few of the early models featuring distinctive "hit and miss" engines are still around, but most enthusiasts operate later model motors that deliver smoother and more efficient performance, similar to those found on large lawn mowers.

Speeders began to lose their niche in the railroad business by the 1980s when maintenance crews were provided with pickup trucks outfitted with flanged wheels that could be lowered for on-rail use. The new vehicles were referred to as road-rail or hy-rail cars. Rail companies began selling or donating the out-of-date speeders, and in the process a new hobby was born.

Rail enthusiasts quickly sought ownership of the speeders and formed a nonprofit group called NARCOA (North America Railcar Operators Association) in 1980. The group is dedicated to the preservation and legal safe operation of railroad equipment used for maintenance of way. The group has grown over the decades and now includes 1,800 members who enjoy operating their equipment on privately owned railroads.

Operators typically own speeders manufactured by one of two companies, Fairmont Railway Motors or Railcar Company and its successor Woodings Railcar Limited. The Canadian models by Woodings featured enclosed cabs to protect workers from the harsh northern winters. The Fairmont cars, originating in Fairmont, Minnesota, date to the early 1900s and are far more popular.

There are similarities between speeder and classic automobile enthusiasts because members personalize their vehicles—customized interiors and special paint schemes are typical. Speeder operators often adopt the paint scheme of their favorite railroad, past or present. And just as antique car owners treasure originality, visitors to events will see speeders that appear the same as they did on the last day of railroad service. The variety of railcars makes for a colorful and interesting display of historical images.

The local affiliate of NARCOA, Appalachian Railcar Excursions LLC, was formed by three partners, Eric Clark, John Gonder, and Chuck Badger. Their purpose is to promote the hobby and organize rail excursions in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The August 2018 excursion held at the Potomac Eagle's home is a recent example that attracted 35 speeders and operators who enjoyed 102 rail miles of sightseeing.

According to Eric Clark, the local members enjoy the experience of operating their cars and seeing landscape that may only be viewed by rail. Eric is quick to credit local railroad owners for permitting the excursions, including the West Virginia Rail Authority and Western Maryland Scenic Railroad. "The railroad owners are great to work with. They only charge a small fee and do whatever they can to help us organize events."

John Gonder agrees. "We do this for fun. And it is special to me because I come from a railroading family starting with my great-great grandfather in the 1800s."

The speeders are a close knit group that is eager to help fellow club members. "We recently had trouble with burned out points



Above: The Speeders look like toys next to their brother; a full size engine.

Below: An "all original" speeder.

Bottom: Owners and operators gather to review safety requirements and plans for their day of sightseeing.



in one of the cars, and within a short time we had friends offering assistance,” stated Clark.

Clark also notes that some of the fun filled events support local charities. “We have a Toys for Happiness excursion along the Southwest Penn Railroad route. Folks set toys along the tracks and we pick them up. Last year we collected around \$2,500 in donations and 275 toys.”

To become a member of NARCOA one must pass a written exam and be mentored by club members. “Safety is our number one concern when we are on the rails. Our cars must be equipped with alarms, lights, radios and other equipment.” Members are always eager to explain the railcars, upcoming events, and related information to perspective members and curious onlookers.

Appalachian Railcar Excursion is busy preparing for its fall event and welcomes inquiries. *For more information on local events and contacts, see ARExcursions.com*




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IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

Every Bridge Tells a Story

Written by: **Sara Mullins**

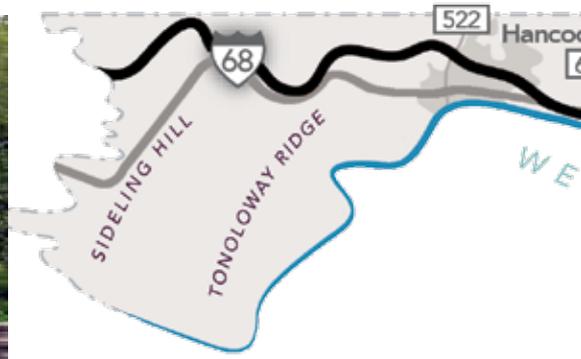
In the late 1700s, the Appalachian Mountains served as a formidable western boundary of our young nation. Presidents George Washington and Thomas Jefferson shared the belief that a national road through Western Maryland, then considered the “Wild West” of the young nation, would help unify the country and enhance commerce. In 1818, the National Pike was completed from Cumberland, Maryland, to the Ohio River, now the site of Wheeling, West Virginia. Eventually this new road, now known as Route 40, connected Wheeling and Cumberland to Baltimore.

An abundance of streams presented safety and other challenges to early travelers along the new roadway, a sometimes dangerous situation that prompted the construction of wood plank bridges. Dissatisfied with lost shipments of merchandise and constant bridge repairs, the citizens of Western Maryland successfully lobbied their representatives to allow construction of more durable bridges using plentiful local sources of stone. A building boom of bridges utilizing limestone, granite, sandstone, slate and marble began and continued throughout the 19th century.

The result is a remarkable legacy in stone, with each bridge telling a story. With 22 historic stone arch structures still standing, Washington County enjoys a unique heritage in the state of Maryland.

Burnside Bridge
at Antietam National Battlefield.





Wilson's Bridge (C-3) during the annual National Pike Wagon Train.
 Photo by TR Garringer, courtesy Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau

The Bridges at Conococheague Creek

C-1 Bridge at Price's Ford, 1822 – Crossed by Confederate soldiers in 1863 retreat from Gettysburg.

C-2 Broadfording Bridge, 1829 – Still in use, its original arches stretch 220 feet - almost the length of a football field.

C-3 Wilson's Bridge, 1819 – First stone bridge built in Washington County. It served as a critical link between eastern seaport cities and western markets and suppliers.

C-4 The Conococheague Bridge, 1829 – One of the most strategic crossings during the Civil War.

C-5 The Conococheague Aqueduct, 1834 – One of 11 aqueducts built from Georgetown to Cumberland that carried the C&O Canal over streams and rivers.



The Bridges at Antietam Creek

A-1 Leitersburg Bridge, No. 2, 1829 – The successor to the original bridge that was washed out by a flood.

A-2 Old Forge Bridge, 1863 – Engineers persuaded Gen. Robert E. Lee not to destroy this span.

A-3 Funkstown Turnpike Bridge, 1823 – It still serves as a vital link, after two centuries.

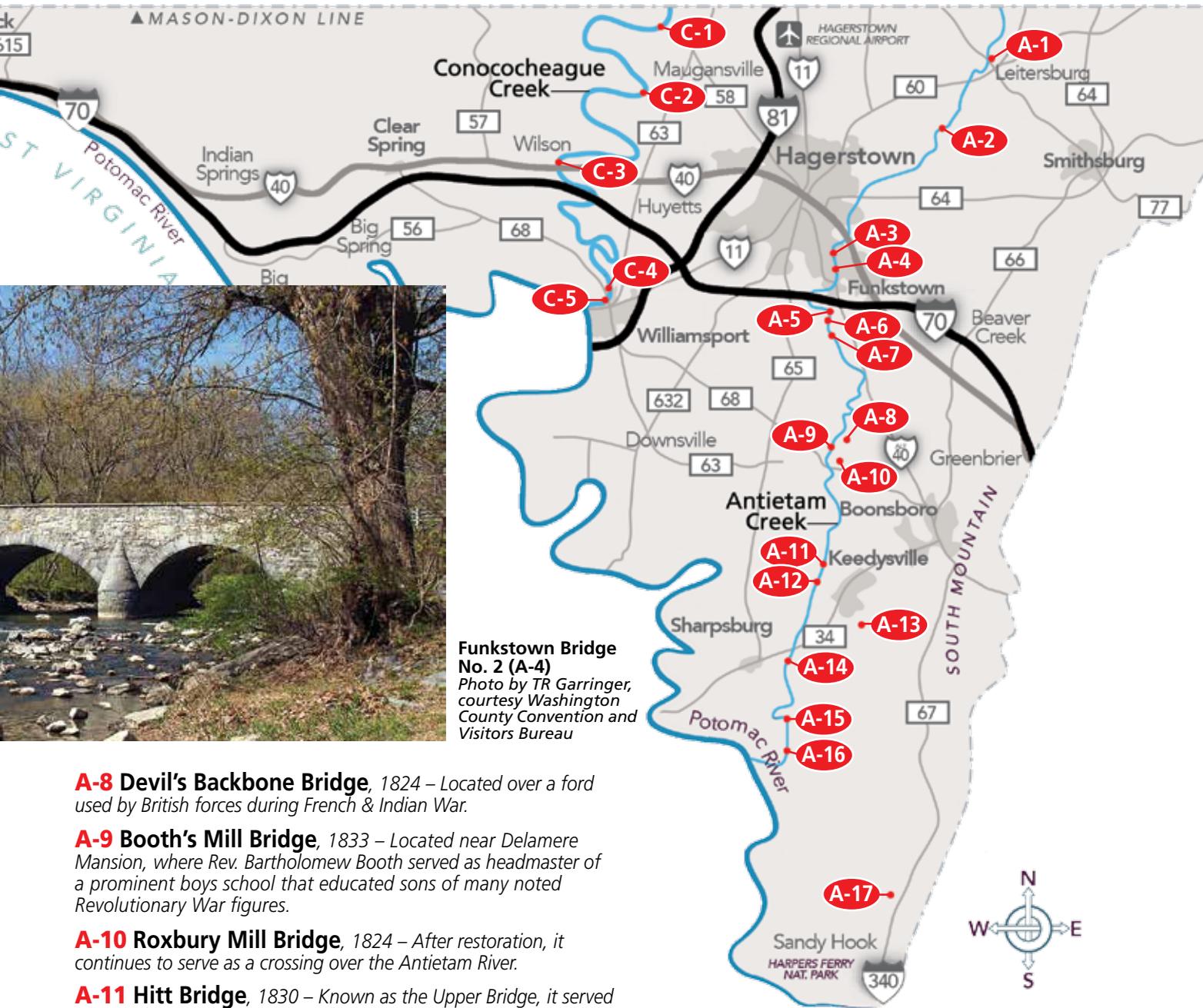
A-4 Funkstown Bridge No. 2, 1833 – Also still in use, with preservation efforts underway.

A-5 Claggett's Mill Race Bridge, 1841 – It echoes the arch and keystone style of C&O Canal structures.

A-6 Claggett's Mill Bridge, 1840 – Located near Valentia, the famous Claggett estate.

A-7 Rose's Mill Bridge, 1839 – Also known as Sharer's Mill. Located at former mill complex.

Burnside Bridge (A-14)
 Photo by TR Garringer, courtesy Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau



Funkstown Bridge No. 2 (A-4)
 Photo by TR Garringer, courtesy Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau

- A-8 Devil's Backbone Bridge**, 1824 – Located over a ford used by British forces during French & Indian War.
- A-9 Booth's Mill Bridge**, 1833 – Located near Delamere Mansion, where Rev. Bartholomew Booth served as headmaster of a prominent boys school that educated sons of many noted Revolutionary War figures.
- A-10 Roxbury Mill Bridge**, 1824 – After restoration, it continues to serve as a crossing over the Antietam River.
- A-11 Hitt Bridge**, 1830 – Known as the Upper Bridge, it served as a key route during the Battle of Antietam.
- A-12 Pry's Mill Bridge**, 1858 – A single lane crossing with unusual cutwaters.
- A-13 Felfoot Bridge**, 1854 – Located near a barn that served as a supply depot during the French & Indian War.
- A-14 Burnside Bridge**, 1834 – Among the most renowned stone arch bridges in North America. Earned fame in 1862, when a small force of Confederate forces held off Burnside's Army Corps for four hours.
- A-15 Antietam Ironworks Bridge**, 1832 – Once the site of the area's largest industrial complex.
- A-16 Antietam Aqueduct**, 1834 – Still in use, it features a stunning view across the Potomac River.
- A-17 Israel Creek Bridge**, 1875 – Built near the end of the stone bridge-building era, near a restored miller's home.



A road trip to visit these bridges is the best way to learn about these amazing structures. The Hagerstown and Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau offer a map, available online at www.visithagerstown.com/files/Bridges-Wash-Co-Brochuref.pdf. For more information, go to www.visithagerstown.com or call 301-791-3246.

Oakland B&O Museum Acquires and Restores 1920 Baldwin Steam Locomotive

Right: The 1920 Baldwin locomotive nearing its final restoration for display at the Oakland B&O Museum.

Below: The Baldwin locomotive arriving in Oakland, MD.



Written by: **Bob Shaffer**
Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**

This 1920 locomotive was originally built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works for the Jonesboro, Lake City and Eastern Railroad in Mississippi, where it was used primarily to transport logs and wood products. It served a number of large sawmills running between Jonesboro, MS, and Blytheville, AR. The locomotive originally carried the #40, but was changed to #76 when it was leased to the St. Louis and

San Francisco Railroad, aka the “Frisco” in 1925. In 1947 it was sold to the Mississippian Railway, where it was used mainly to transport Bentonite clay from a plant in Smithville, MS. The clay was an important bonding material used by foundries. Sometimes referred to as the “Bentonite Road,” the Mississippian Railway was owned and operated by two brothers, Jim and Frank Carlisle. They owned two nearly identical Baldwin locomotives that they proudly maintained in tip-top condition. Here #76 enjoyed perhaps the best time of its life, steaming merrily through the northeast corner of Mississippi for about 20 years.

In 1967 Sloan Cornell purchased locomotive #76 and moved it to Pennsylvania for service on his Penn View Mountain scenic railroad. This was a short-line tourist railway operating in an area known as Packsaddle Gap,

near Blairsville. It was really put to the test by climbing a steep 4% grade, negotiating “switch backs” to reach a scenic overlook. By some accounts this is when the 50-year-old locomotive began showing its age. Then, in 1976, Mr. Cornell closed his Penn View Mountain railway and moved his entire operation, “lock, stock, and enginehouse” to the Gettysburg area, where he operated the Gettysburg Scenic Railway. While running on the Gettysburg line, Engine #76 reportedly began a rapid decline due in part to corrosion caused by the hard water it ingested over the years. It is said that #76 was “out of square, patched up, and one very tired 1920 Baldwin” when it was taken out of service on the Gettysburg line. In 1999 it was sold to the Ohio Central Railroad to await its turn for a complete overhaul. In 2005, still awaiting restoration, the locomotive was sold to the Steam Railroading Institute at Owosso, Michigan, where it began a slow restoration process that was ultimately abandoned in favor of another locomotive.

In the Fall of 2017 the Oakland B&O Museum received a generous donation from the Daniel E. Offutt III Charitable Trust, for the purpose of acquiring a steam locomotive for display in front of the Oakland Station. This was followed by another generous donation from Tom and Sarah Kuhn to facilitate enhancements to the engine and the surrounding area.

After an extensive search, the Oakland B&O Museum was able to purchase Engine #76 from the Steam Railroading Institute of Michigan. It was moved from Michigan to Oakland, Maryland, in July 2018, and restored ‘for display purposes only’ by Diversified Rail Services, Inc. While this engine was never actually used on the B&O Railroad line, once it was moved

to Oakland, a town rich in B&O history, a decision was made to convert it to a B&O engine. In researching the history of B&O steam engines, it was determined that Engine #76 most closely resembles the B&O Class E-39 steam engines in certain respects, including wheel configuration, driver diameter, cylinder bore/stroke, gross tonnage, and operating boiler pressure. The B&O engines of that era were

assigned numbers in the “400” series. So the #476 was chosen for the adopted engine, employing the number 4 from its original identity, and the number 76 which it carried for most of its working life. The Oakland B&O Museum is pleased to have had the opportunity to preserve this piece of railroad history for future generations.

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Nature Meets Luxury *at Rocky Gap Casino Resort*

Written by: **Sara Mullins**



PHOTO BY LANCE C. BELL



Western Maryland's Rocky Gap Casino Resort attracts guests and visitors from near and far to enjoy its spectacular mountain setting, abundant amenities, and wealth of activities. Located within Maryland's popular Rocky Gap State Park, the AAA4-Diamond Resort sits alongside Lake Habeeb, where it faces Maryland's only Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course.

"We have something for everyone," says Wanda Holt-schneider, the resort's director of marketing.

Golfers will find unique challenges as they navigate the course's 18 holes, evenly split between the front nine's hilly,



PHOTO COURTESY ROCKY GAP

tree-lined terrain and the more forgiving meadows of the back nine.

The popular 24 hour casino plays a starring role within the resort, with more than 600 machines and popular table games.

For those seeking conference space for meetings and special events large

and small, an additional 15,000 square feet has been added to accommodate groups from 10 to 400. The resort offers entertainment periodically within the Allegheny Event Center.

Guest rooms feature views of the lake or the golf course. Recent updates include renovated bathrooms and new

bedding, carpet and drapes. All rooms are equipped with a microwave and refrigerator, flat-screen TVs, items for personal and clothing care, and safes for valuables. Other amenities include room service, free wireless internet, cable TV and free copies of *USA Today*. Guests can also use the fitness center, indoor swimming pool and whirlpool located downstairs.

Also located on the lobby level, The Spa at Rocky Gap caters to resort guests and visitors with a full range of services, including massages, facials, waxing, body treatments, manicures and pedicures.

The resort provides guests and visitors with multiple choices of atmosphere, cuisine and beverages. The Lakeside Restaurant offers breakfast daily and dinner Wednesday through Sunday from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and Thursday through Sunday thereafter. A Little Munch is a grab-and-go eatery located within the lobby that is open 24 hours a day. Patrons of the



PHOTO BY LANCE C. BELL



SPA & RESTAURANT PHOTOS COURTESY ROCKY GAP

Top: Rocky Gap's 18-hole Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course.

Above: The Spa caters to guests with a full range of services (left). The Lakeside Restaurant is one of several dining options at Rocky Gap.

Below: Nestled in the mountains of Western Maryland, every season has beautiful scenic views overlooking Lake Habeeb.



PHOTO BY LANCE C. BELL

Signatures Bar & Grill can watch sports on a multi-TV screen wall or live entertainment on the patio from April through October. Casual dining, a full bar and extensive wine list are featured at LB's Place. Both Signatures and LB's offer outside dining during warmer weather.

"We've made major changes to our back yard," says Wanda, referring to the recently opened Lakeside Terrace where guests can relax and enjoy views of Lake Habeeb and Evitts Mountain. Seating is available near several fire pits, beneath a spacious pergola, or in Adirondack chairs along the shoreline of the lake. The Terrace Bar, open seasonally, offers a variety of beverage choices.

The resort's location within Rocky Gap State Park has its advantages. With its specialty golf course, lake, and mountains located just outside the resort walls, guests can enjoy a wide range of outdoor activities. Those wanting to explore Lake Habeeb by boat can rent their choice of canoes, kayaks, pedal pontoons and yolo boards (also known as standup paddleboards). Other lake options include swimming, fishing or picnicking nearby. The Touch of Nature Trail is paved and fully accessible. Mountain bikers can test their skills on designated trails. Hikers can explore the Lakeside Loop along the lake shoreline, Rocky Trail, Canyon Overlook Trail, and Evitts Home-site Trail that offers panoramic views of the resort and its surroundings after an uphill climb.

For more information about the Rocky Gap Casino Resort, go to www.rockygapcasino.com. Readers interested in the resort's history can go to www.mountaindiscoveries.com, click on the link under the tab "Past and Present Issues," click on "Fall/Winter 2013" issue, then "Rocky Gap Casino Resort."

Top to bottom: Guests can rent their choice of canoes, kayaks, pedal pontoons or standup paddleboards. Swimming beaches and fishing are nearby.

The Resort's 24 hour casino has more than 600 machines and table games.

The recently opened Lakeside Terrace is located at the Resort's back yard where guests can relax and enjoy views of Lake Habeeb and Evitts Mountain. The Terrace Bar, open seasonally, offers a variety of beverage choices.



PHOTO BY LANCE C. BELL



No one under the age of 21 permitted on the casino floor. Please play responsibly, for help visit mdgamblinghelp.org or call 1-800-GAMBLER.



BOTTOM THREE PHOTOS COURTESY ROCKY GAP

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Ladies Basket Phaeton

Circa 1912, owned by Cornelius
"Commodore" Vanderbilt.

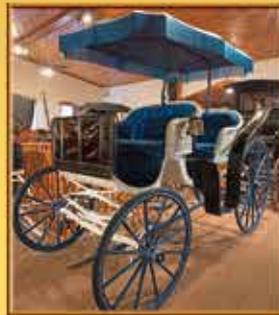
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2018 Calendar of Events

June 8 – 10 – WHISKEY REBELLION FESTIVAL

June 8 – Whiskey Rebellion Celebration at Museum

June 9 – Whiskey Rebellion Festival at Canal Place

June 10 – Heritage Home & Garden Tour

June 9-10 – Museum Open House/50th Annual Heritage Days

Special Tours/Car Show at Canal Place

June 14 – Mountain Side Baroque Festival Concert

Nov. 10 – Dancing with the Local Stars

Nov 23 – Dec 31 – Holiday Events Series –
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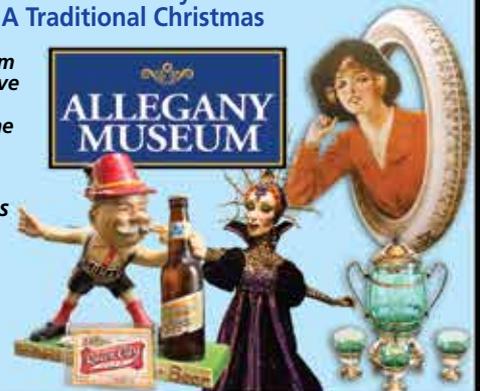
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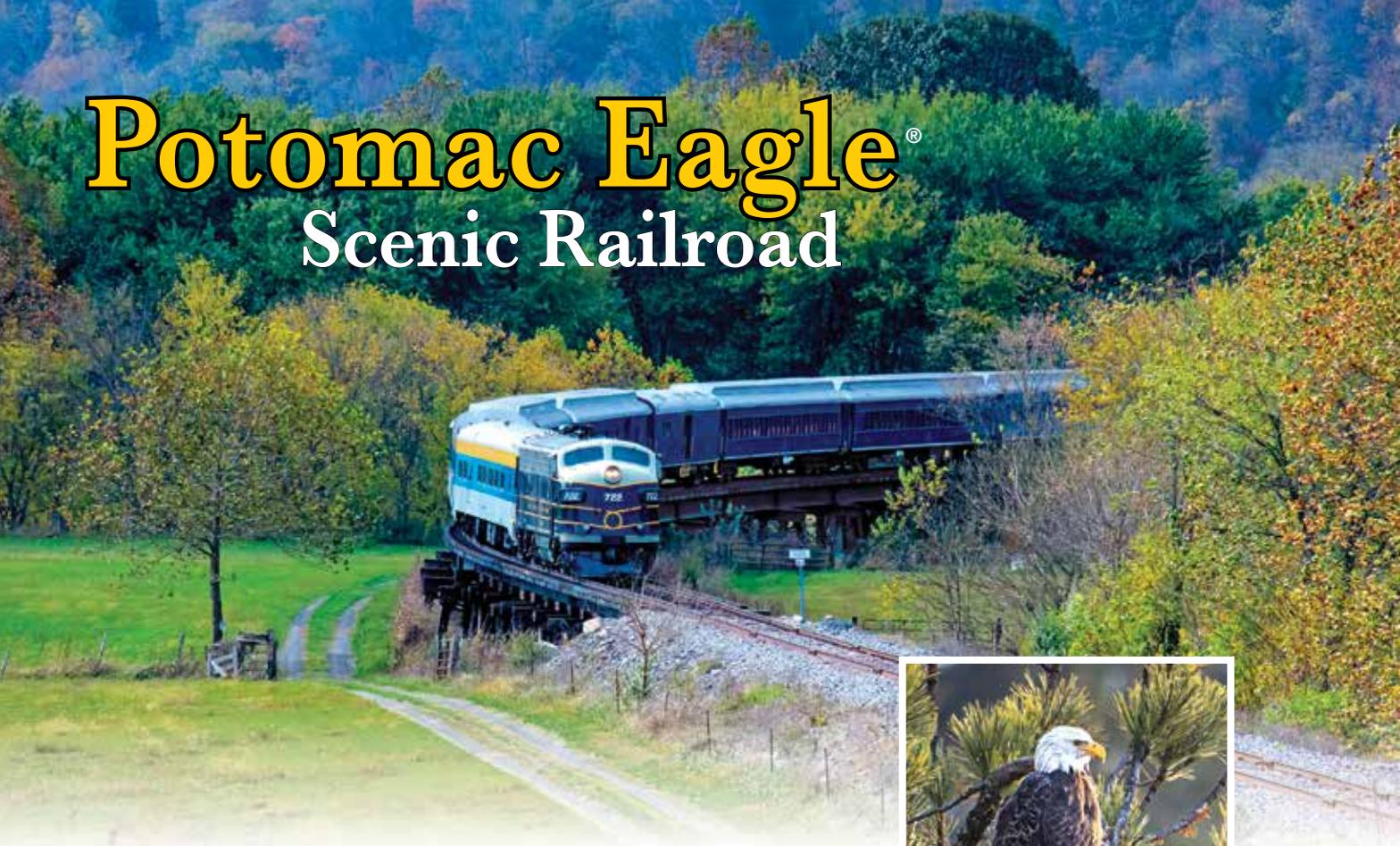
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Potomac Eagle®

Scenic Railroad



Fall foliage along the South Branch of the Potomac River – Romney, West Virginia

Written by: **Jodi Burnsworth**
Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**

As summer slips away, cooler temperatures and colorful foliage takes its place—a sure sign of autumn splendor! A train ride is a unique way to take in that fantastic fall color.

Your journey begins at Wappocomo Station, situated next to a charming homestead and a sprawling view of the mountains. Enjoy the sounds of vintage diesels as they lead you through beautiful pastures and farms dating back to the 1700s. As you wind along the South Branch of the Potomac River, you'll enter a visually striking gorge known as the Trough. One of the most scenic spots along the South Branch, the Trough is home to American bald eagles.

Our Trough Trip, a three-hour round-trip to see bald eagles, is offered every day, October 1-28, 2018. On weekdays, departures are 1 pm. On Saturdays and Sundays, two departures are offered: 10 am and 2:30 pm, except Sunday, October 28, the last day of the season, there is one departure, at 1 pm.

Two classes of service are offered on our excursions: Club and Coach. Club includes a 3-course meal, complemented



The gorge known as the Trough along the South Branch of the Potomac River is home to American bald eagles.



with Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad china. These beautifully restored lounge cars offer loveseats with tables and are climate-controlled. Reservations required; entree chosen at time of reservation.

Coach is great for families or groups, as an affordable (yet still comfortable) seating option on the train. These 1920s era coaches have cushioned, high-back, bench-style seats, with a reversible back so passengers can face in either direction the train is moving. Windows may be opened.

We welcomed a new engine to our fleet this year! Canadian Pacific number 8250 was built in 1955, originally as CP 8516. After retirement, it was purchased by Larry's Truck and Electric in Ohio in 2015. Potomac Eagle purchased it last fall and it was delivered in November 2017. Our crew spent the winter and spring doing maintenance and giving it a new paint scheme. Now in Potomac Eagle blue, it really complements the rest of our equipment. You'll find it leading southbound on excursions, while our beloved 722, in its B&O scheme, leads northbound.

Due to popular demand, we added more Green Spring Specials this year! Previously, we offered this trip just once



PHOTO COURTESY JODI BURNSWORTH

Above: A new engine – the Canadian Pacific #8250 – was added to the Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad this year. The new paint scheme of Potomac Eagle blue was completed in the Spring.

Inset: the Canadian Pacific #8250 pre primer and new paint.

a year for those railfans who enjoyed riding “rare mileage.” We found over the past two years that more families are enjoying this trip because it is shorter and more affordable. The trip to Green Spring is a 1½ hour trip northbound, approximately 25 miles round-trip. Enjoy river views along the South Branch of the Potomac River as well as beautiful farmland and rock cuts (like Hanging Rock).

The October Trough Trips book quickly so be sure to make reservations soon. Book online at potomaceagle.info or call **304-424-0736**.

Re-enacting Maryland's First Chautauqua

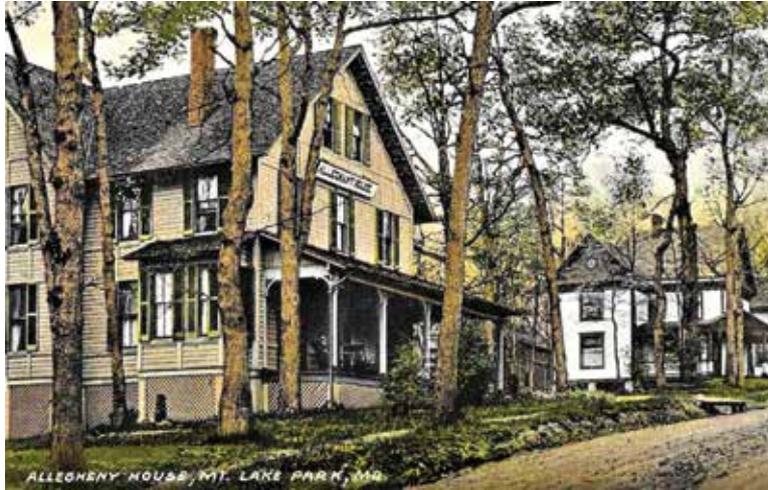


Mountain Lake Park, MD – July 5-7, 2019

Written by: **Lori Youse** and **Mary Helen Spear**
Photos courtesy **Al Feldstein**



Many of the cottages in Mt. Lake Park, Maryland, can trace their origins back to 1882 and the development of a Chautauqua-style resort in the state's most western county, Garrett. A small number of these homes are still inhabited by



Allegheny House, one of the boarding houses at Mt. Lake Park, MD.

descendants of the original owners who built them in order to become summer residents of this resort. Of historical note, then, is that some of these cottages were newly constructed summer homes when Mountain Lake Park hosted Maryland's first Chautauqua session in August of 1882, a program that would last for nearly sixty years.

To celebrate the upcoming 25th modern day Maryland Chautauqua, Garrett Lakes Arts Festival, with help from a grant from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, will be returning to historic Mountain Lake Park July 5-7, 2019, with a three-day re-creation of Maryland's early Chautauqua events.

This three-day celebration of the original Maryland Chautauqua will include a schedule of daily lectures, historical re-enactments, musical presentations, and more. Re-enactors of notable historical figures from those earlier Chautauqua years will also be on hand to celebrate our return to earlier times. A special addition to this program will be the opportunity for participants to share their own personal stories and connections to the development of Mountain Lake Park and the Chautauqua influence.

While the daytime schedule will focus on re-creating and commemorating some of the earlier Chautauqua programs, the regular program for the 2019 Maryland Humanities Chautauqua presented by GLAF will continue to be

scheduled as evening performances, and those will also be held in Mountain Lake Park.

Chautauqua history dates back to 1872 when the first program took place in the Chautauqua Lake area of New York (70 miles

SW of Buffalo). The purpose was to enrich the background of Methodist Sunday School teachers with presentations about culture and history. This concept of summer enrichment programs spread rapidly, both through home study (the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle) and through travelling Chautauquas, that brought history, art, literature, foreign languages, the classics, and music theory to cities and towns across America.

In 1881, four Methodist ministers from Wheeling, West Virginia, were traveling through western Maryland in search of a place to develop their own Chautauqua-style resort that would combine the Chautauqua concept with spiritual renewal. When they found the 800 acres known as Hoye's Big Pasture, an area located between the nearby town of Oakland and the fashionable resort of Deer Park, they believed that the combination of picturesque scenery, cool mountain air, and train service in nearby Oakland made this an ideal location for their endeavor.

On September 9, 1881, that group of ministers met with a group of interested businessmen in Wheeling, West Virginia, to discuss the purchase of this land. At a second meeting held on September 13, 1881, Rev. C. P. Masden was elected President; J. C. Alderson was elected secretary; and A. S. List was elected Treasurer. Also reported was the purchase of 800 acres of land.

In 1882, the first of many buildings to be constructed in this new resort were the Tabernacle and Assembly Hall and a restaurant. A number of cottages and hotels would follow. In July of 1882, the first camp meeting was held on the grounds of the Mountain Lake Park Hotel. In August the first session of Sunday School Assembly was held. It would later become known as the Mountain Chautauqua, making it the first Chautauqua held in Maryland.

In time, more cottages, hotels, and boarding houses were built, and a lake was constructed, for while the name Mountain Lake Park suggested that a lake already existed, one did not. Streams were dammed in order to form a lake suitable for swimming and boating. In the winter, that lake also served as a source of ice for local residents, and the B & O Railroad became so dependent on the ice for their dining cars that they ran a spur to the icehouses. The association also acquired the services of H. E. Faul, the same landscape architect who was responsible for laying out Druid Hill Park in Baltimore, Maryland, to survey and plat Mountain Lake Park. He was assisted by several local men who were residents of the Park: Mr. Henry Artus, J. Lee Phillips and J. A. Enlow.

Throughout the development of this resort, the founders insisted that the culture of the Park maintain a high moral tone. The charter included restrictions against dancing, card-playing, drinking and gambling. In fact, these restrictions were written into the deeds. Numerous Mountain Lake Park residents still have copies of the deeds containing the language that restricts those activities.



The Amphitheatre, Mountain Lake Park, Maryland – a 1907 postcard published by C. E. Gerkins, Cumberland, Maryland.

Mountain Lake Park residents did not have to travel far away, however, to partake in gambling, drinking, card-playing and dancing, for all of these pastimes were allowed in the nearby town of Loch Lynn. Over the years, a popular saying evolved:

***“If you want to sin, go to Loch Lynn
For Jesus’ sake, go to Mt. Lake”***

Situated between Oakland and Deer Park, both of which held fine hotels, the addition of this new park would create a line of three resorts, all promoting the health benefits of clean mountain air, and all of which were easily accessible by rail. In November of 1881, potential buyers traveled by train from Baltimore to the Park in order to attend a public sale of lots in this newly developed summer resort. Among the first purchasers were Mrs. H. Beacham of Baltimore,



Streams were dammed in order to construct the lake for swimming and boating at Mountain Lake Park. The postcard (above) is postmarked August 11, 1908 and features the Boat House at the lake.

W. T. Graham, George Bullard, C. M. Babb, Rev. W. I. Alexander, A. H. Malone, Rev. J. H. Glanigan, Honorable W. H. Taw, Rev. A. S. Hank, Mrs. Blake, George Atkinson, and S. L. Allen.

Among those who built the first houses were Dr. Logan, A. S. List, J. C. Alderson, J. F. Goucher, J. B. VanMeter, Rev. John Thompson, Messrs. Weaver and Bardall, Rev. T. B. Huges, Rev. Sharp, and C. W. Connor. The cottages built on these lots were to serve as summer residences; however, while the early Park homes were described as cottages, they did not, perhaps, fit the more modern definition of a cottage. Designed to accommodate large families and a number of guests, many of these cottages were three-story houses, some with mansard roofs and turrets.

In order to encourage folks to become part of this summer resort, rental spaces on the grounds of the Assembly Hall were also made available to those who might wish to camp there during the summer program.

In time, ball fields, tennis courts, and a bowling alley were built. In 1900, an umbrella-shaped amphitheatre was constructed across the street from the Tabernacle. The Bashford Amphitheatre, a circular building, was 172 feet in diameter, 75 feet high in the center, and able to seat 5,000 guests. The stage could accommodate 200 people, and beneath the stage were dressing rooms and toilets. Acclaimed as acoustically excellent, due to the lack of any center poles, this theatre also provided an unobstructed view for audience members.

As the resort became popular and the number of visitors grew, hotels such as the Mt. Lake Park Hotel, the Hotel Dennett, the Columbian Hotel, and the Hotel Chautauqua were constructed. Boarding houses also became a popular accommodation for visitors. These included the Braethorn, Mrs. Schrock's, Mrs. Turney's, Allegheny Cottage, Haydenhurst, and more. In spite of the growing number of accommodations, however, there were times when more rooms were needed. In an August 14, 1899 special dispatch to the *Baltimore Sun*, the superintendent of the Chautauqua, Dr. W. L. Davidson, notes that in the first week of the Mountain Chautauqua, the attendance had reached its largest numbers ever. Stating that boarding houses and hotels had run out of rooms and were turning away people, he appealed to residents to "provide the name of every housekeeper who could spare a room."



Hotel Chautauqua at Mountain Lake Park, Maryland.

The Chautauqua summer program, designed to offer classes for all age groups, included courses in liberal arts, fine arts and natural sciences and incorporated a wide variety of featured speakers, artists, musical performances, plays, moving pictures known as vitagraphs, special conferences and camp meetings. True to the founding mission, the first Chautauqua blended religious revivalism with cultural and educational activities.

In the July 1895 "Midsummer Programme Edition" of the quarterly publication known as *The Mountain Chautauqua*, courses of instruction included early and modern periods of English Language and Literature, German Language and Literature, Classic Greek, New Testament Greek,

Classical Latin, French Conversation, French Literature and French Phonetics. College students could take courses of college instruction designed for college entry. School teachers could enroll in pedagogical instruction coursework. Among the many fine arts courses offered were classes in painting, music instruction, elocution, wood carving

and amateur photography. Courses for Sunday school workers were also an important part of the schedule.

A promotion in the July 1895 edition of *The Mountain Chautauqua* described this mountain Chautauqua as a place that "will build you up in hope, faith, and love for your Creator and your fellow-men!"

One notable speaker to visit Mountain Lake Park was President William Howard Taft who spoke at the 1911 Summer Chautauqua. Arriving there by rail, he gave a speech to a sold-out audience in the Bashford Amphitheatre and was given a special tour of the area before returning by train to Washington, D.C.

The Chautauqua program began its gradual decline in 1918. Hotels such as The Loch Lynn Hotel, the Columbia, and the Hotel Dennett either burned down or were torn down within a ten-year time period, and summer programs, now fewer, offered less variety. A wide range of factors led to the eventual downfall. Some of these included the advent of the car, construction of better roads, the introduction of movies and radio, war, the Great Depression and the rise of air conditioning. There were also local factors. In 1902, the B & O Railroad had withdrawn monetary support for the Park and, in time, almost completely stopped having excursion rates.

Economic decline of the park took its toll, and in 1920, the original Association turned over its property to the Methodist Board of Foreign Missions. Through the 1930s and '40s there were efforts to revive the programs, including events such as singing contests, folk festivals, conventions, pageants, choir festivals and performances by the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra. In spite of attempts to rekindle the energy and spirit of the original Chautauquas, however, attendance at the performances was often very low.

On August 28, 1941, the auditorium part of the Tabernacle burned, and in 1942, for the first time since its beginning, there was no summer program in Mt. Lake Park. In 1946, the well-known amphitheatre was torn down after being deemed a fire hazard.

Many of the same factors that influenced the demise of Chautauqua at the local level also affected its success and popularity on the national stage. With the advent of radio and moving pictures, economic decline, and changing cultural attitudes, the Chautauqua movement in America eventually died out.

The Chautauquas were restarted in 1976 in North Dakota as a humanities program, incorporating the now-standard format of a monologue by a scholar/re-creator acting as a historical character, then interacting with the audience while still in-character, and then coming out of character to answer audience questions as a modern scholar. GLAF

(Garrett Lakes Arts Festival), Garrett College and Maryland Humanities worked together in 1995 to restart Maryland Chautauqua. To celebrate the upcoming 25th modern day Maryland Chautauqua, GLAF will be returning to historic Mountain Lake Park July 5-7, 2019, with a three-day recreation of Maryland's early Chautauqua events. Mountain Lake Park is located within the Mountain Maryland Gateway to the West Heritage Area, <https://www.garrettheritage.com>, and GLAF has received grant funds from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, <http://mht.maryland.gov/heritageareas.shtml>, for the upcoming Chautauqua event.

Garrett County has remained a leader of the Chautauqua Movement in Maryland, both in its nineteenth century origins and in its modern resurgence. In July 2019, this small town in Garrett County hopes to recapture the magic and history of those first years.

This Project has been financed in part with State Funds from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, an instrumentality of the State of Maryland. However, the Project contents or opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority.

We gratefully acknowledge the sources, information, and photos provided to us by the following people: Al Feldstein, Karen Wooddell, Katharine Smith, Mountain Lake Park Clerk Treasurer Lenora Fischetti, and Garrett County Historical Museum volunteers Martha DeBerry, Eleanor Callis, and Terri Shaffer.



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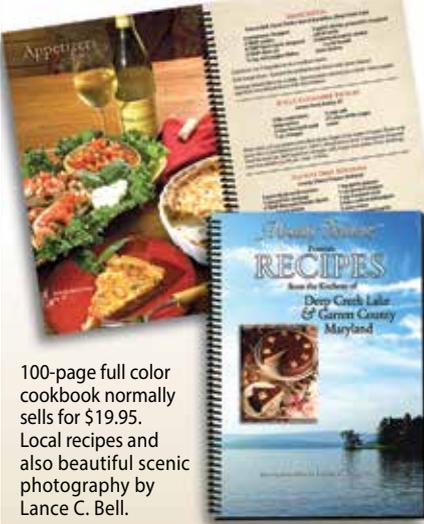


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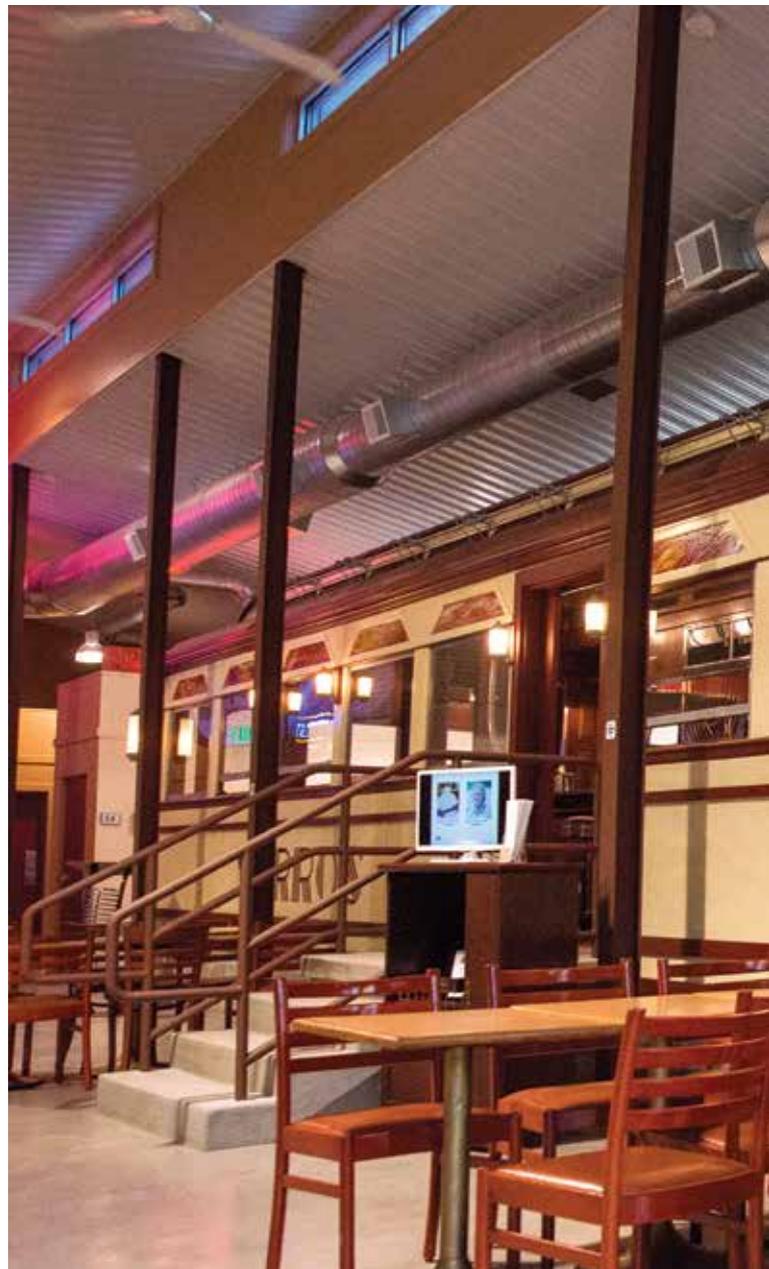


Pennsylvania's Laurel Highlands has a new Lincoln Highway Attraction

Written by: **Sara Mullins**
Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**

After years of anticipation and planning, the restored 1938 Serro's Diner was moved into the newly constructed Lincoln Highway Experience Museum to take its place as the key attraction within the new museum wing; bringing the total exhibit space to approximately 5,000 square feet.

Housed in a 203-year old, National Register-listed building near Latrobe, PA, that once served as a stagecoach stop, the museum offers a glimpse of the Lincoln Highway era from 1912 – 1940. The Lincoln Highway was this country's first coast-to-coast route from Times Square in New York City to San Francisco. The museum features interpretive exhibits (several are interactive) that reflect roadside services popular with motorists during this period, including neon signs, filling station façade, vintage gas pumps, a 1937 Packard, a restored 1938 tourist cabin – and the diner.



Each visitor will have the convenience of using a Tour Mate Audio Wand that gives the ‘back story’ of exhibits. After viewing the 13-minute award-winning film, *Through the Windshield*, and other exhibits on License Plates, quirky Roadside Architecture, Eisenhower’s 1919 Military Convoy, Drive-in movies, and Postcards, visitors are invited to sit and write out their own Lincoln Highway postcard for museum staff to affix a postage stamp and mail it!

Moving into the new wing, visitors will immediately hear popular tunes of the 30s and 40s that set the stage for several large Lincoln Highway artifacts ahead. “The diner is the keystone to our museum,” says Olga Herbert, executive director of the Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor non-profit that operates the museum. “It is the show-stopper. With 30 lights inside and out, it has a ‘wow’ factor.” This Jerry O’Mahony diner was considered the Cadillac of

diners when they were in their heyday. These distinctively American restaurants welcomed people from all walks of life and featured regional cooking at reasonable prices.

Brothers Lou and Joe Serro of Herminie, Pennsylvania, purchased the diner in 1938 and served patrons from its location near the Pennsylvania Turnpike Irwin Exit until 1958 when it was sold to the Rolka family who made several modifications when they moved it to Youngwood, Pennsylvania, and renamed it The Willow Diner. In 1992, the Rolkas sold the deteriorating diner to the Senator John Heinz History Center, which donated it to the Lincoln

Facing page: The Lincoln Highway Experience Museum and new wing.

Below: The restored diner, housed in the new wing, is the main attraction of the museum.





Diner interior with ceramic tiled walls, marbled stained glass windows and original 1938 marbled countertop.

Highway Heritage Corridor in 2003. After restorations were completed in 2013, the diner received the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Award from Preservation PA. In April, the diner was moved from a Latrobe warehouse to its new home at the Lincoln Highway Experience.

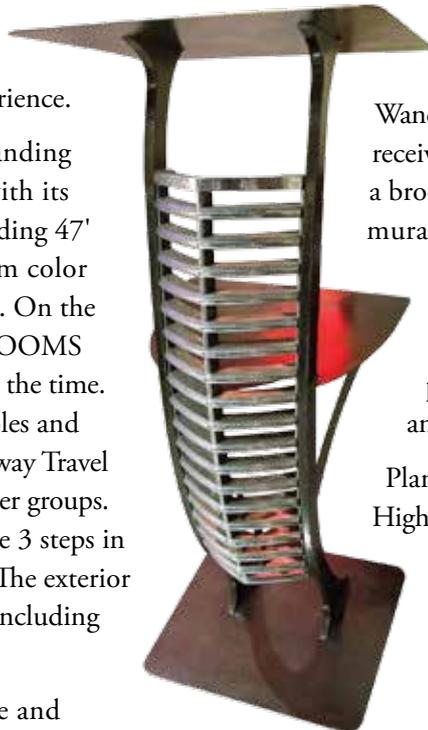
The diner is an elegant and commanding centerpiece within the new wing with its streamlined porcelain exterior extending 47' long by 11.5' wide in a warm cream color accented by burgundy trim and text. On the lower right side, the words REST ROOMS highlight an amenity much valued at the time. Just outside the diner's entrance, tables and chairs once used at the Bedford Midway Travel Plaza are set up to accommodate larger groups. Visitors can enter the diner using the 3 steps in front or the ADA ramp in the rear. The exterior and interior of the entire museum, including the Gift Shop, are accessible.

"They can interact and get up close and personal to admire its Brazilian mahogany interior, ceramic tiled walls, marbled stained glass windows and marble countertop,"

Olga says. "It's the same 1938 counter, with a few dings here and there that are part of its history. We restored it according to the stringent Secretary of the Interior Standards."

In addition to use of the Tour Mate Audio Wand, all visitors to the Lincoln Highway Experience receive a 60-page Lincoln Highway Driving Guide; a brochure describing locations of Lincoln Highway murals, exhibits, gas pumps, and roadside giants along a 200-mile stretch of the Highway in Pennsylvania; a Lincoln Highway postcard with postage; plus a treat from the diner – a piece of pie and coffee for adults, or a fruit cup and juice box for children.

Plan your road trip to this new, fun-filled Lincoln Highway Experience attraction for all ages. It is open 10 am – 4 pm, Monday to Saturday, April to December; and, 10 am – 4 pm, Monday to Friday, January to March. Last visitors admitted at 3 pm. Group rates available.



This 1939 Nash grill has been converted into a podium for use in the museum.

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Neon signs, filling station facade, vintage gas pumps, drive-in movie speaker, tots fun room and many other exhibits are all part of the Lincoln Highway Experience. Plan a road trip to this fun-filled attraction for all ages.



Kids in the Kitchen

Written by: **Mary Reisinger**
Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**

Olivia Stewart, who had her twelfth birthday on March 27, 2018, has been around cooking all her life because that is what her father does for a living.

Rick Stewart did not plan a culinary career. He worked construction until he was injured in an accident, and turned to bartending at a friend's place. When he helped out in the kitchen, he discovered an affinity for cooking. Since 1996, he has been building his reputation as a chef. Currently, he works for a restaurant called Crave Eatery that operates a take-out restaurant in Elkton, Maryland, a forty-foot food truck with stops in Maryland and Delaware, and catering services for private clubs and special events.

His daughter Olivia really enjoys making all sorts of things. Her favorite dish to cook is fried squash, but she also makes some delicious desserts such as brownies and cheese Danish. She says when they don't have time to make the Danish pastry from scratch, they buy the dough and mix up the cheese filling. The only food she avoids is eggs cooked by themselves. "They're okay if they're mixed into rice or something." Olivia watches cooking shows such as *Chopped* and *Kids Baking Championship*—but she thinks that while being a contestant would probably be "fun," it would definitely be "terrifying."

Olivia is a seventh grader this fall at Shue Medill Middle School in Newark, Delaware. In her spare time, Olivia enjoys riding horses, swimming, drawing, playing the cello, and reading. "I read all the time, actually." She hopes to be a marine biologist, and says she would love to learn scuba diving.

Olivia visits her paternal grandmother, Shirley Young, as often as she can. When her father's busy work schedule



Olivia Stewart and the gluten free flourless cake.

prevents him from taking Olivia to Shirley's home near Cumberland, Maryland, Shirley travels to Elkton to see Olivia. Olivia and her grandmother share a middle name, Rae, and like to "hang out" together. They engage in a variety of activities, including trips to the beach, browsing the shops, eating out, or cooking in. On a recent visit, they made some yummy Pizza Bites and then they decided to try baking a flourless cake, a suitable dessert for a gluten free diet, or simply a lovely ending to a hearty meal featuring fried squash.

Chocolate Gluten Free Flourless Cake

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- ½ cup blanched hazelnuts or almonds or macadamia nuts
- 8 tablespoons sugar, divided
- 3 ounces bittersweet chocolate
- ½ cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 tablespoon Frangelico or amaretto (optional)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 5 egg whites, at room temperature
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- Fresh sliced strawberries for serving (optional)
- Strawberry yogurt (optional)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Generously coat an 8" or 9" springform pan with 2 teaspoons of the butter and dust with 1 tablespoon of the cocoa powder (don't tap out the excess cocoa; leave it in the pan).

In a food processor, chop the nuts with 1 tablespoon of sugar until finely ground.

In the top of a double boiler over barely simmering water, melt the chocolate and the remaining 4 teaspoons butter, stirring occasionally, until smooth. Remove from heat and place in a large bowl. Add the nut mixture, sour cream, egg yolks, Frangelico or amaretto, vanilla, cinnamon, 5 tablespoons of the remaining sugar, and the remaining 2 tablespoons cocoa powder. Stir until well-blended.

In another large bowl, with an electric mixer on high speed, beat the egg whites and salt until foamy. Gradually add the remaining 2 tablespoons sugar, beating until the whites hold stiff peaks when the beaters are lifted.

Stir ¼ of the beaten whites into the chocolate mixture to lighten it. Gently fold in the remaining whites. Spoon into the prepared pan. Gently smooth the top.

Bake for 30 minutes, or until the cake has risen, is dry on top, and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with a few moist crumbs. Cool on rack until warm. The cake will fall dramatically. Loosen edges with a knife and remove the pan sides.

Serve with yogurt and sliced strawberries, if desired. Makes 12 servings.

Per serving: 160 calories, 4 g protein, 15 g carbohydrates, 10 g fat, 4 g saturated fat, 46 mg cholesterol, 1 g dietary fiber, 80 mg sodium.

Pizza Bites

- 2 cans (12 oz each) Golden Layers refrigerated buttermilk biscuits
- 60 small slices Pepperoni (3½ oz)
- 5 sticks Colby-Monterey Jack cheese, cut into pieces
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese
- ½ teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1 jar (8 oz) pizza sauce

Preheat oven to 375°F. Spray large cookie sheet with cooking spray. Separate 1 can of dough into biscuits. Keep second can refrigerated until ready to use.

On floured cutting board flatten and roll each biscuit with rolling pin, into oval shape. Cut in half.

Place several pieces of pepperoni and piece of cheese on one half; fold over half of dough to form triangular shape. Wet the edges with a little water to help hold together and then use fork to crimp edges. Repeat with remaining dough, pepperoni, and cheese. Place on baking sheet leaving about 2" between.

Brush dough with beaten egg. Sprinkle with shredded Parmesan cheese and Italian seasoning. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until golden brown.

In small microwave bowl, heat pizza sauce, loosely covered for 45 to 60 seconds or until warm. Mozzarella Cheese and Italian seasoning may be added to pizza sauce to taste. Serve with Pizza Bites for dipping.



Finished Pizza Bites ready for dipping.

SHADY ACRES MOTOCROSS

Dirt Bikes Down On the Farm: Shady Acres Motocross Park

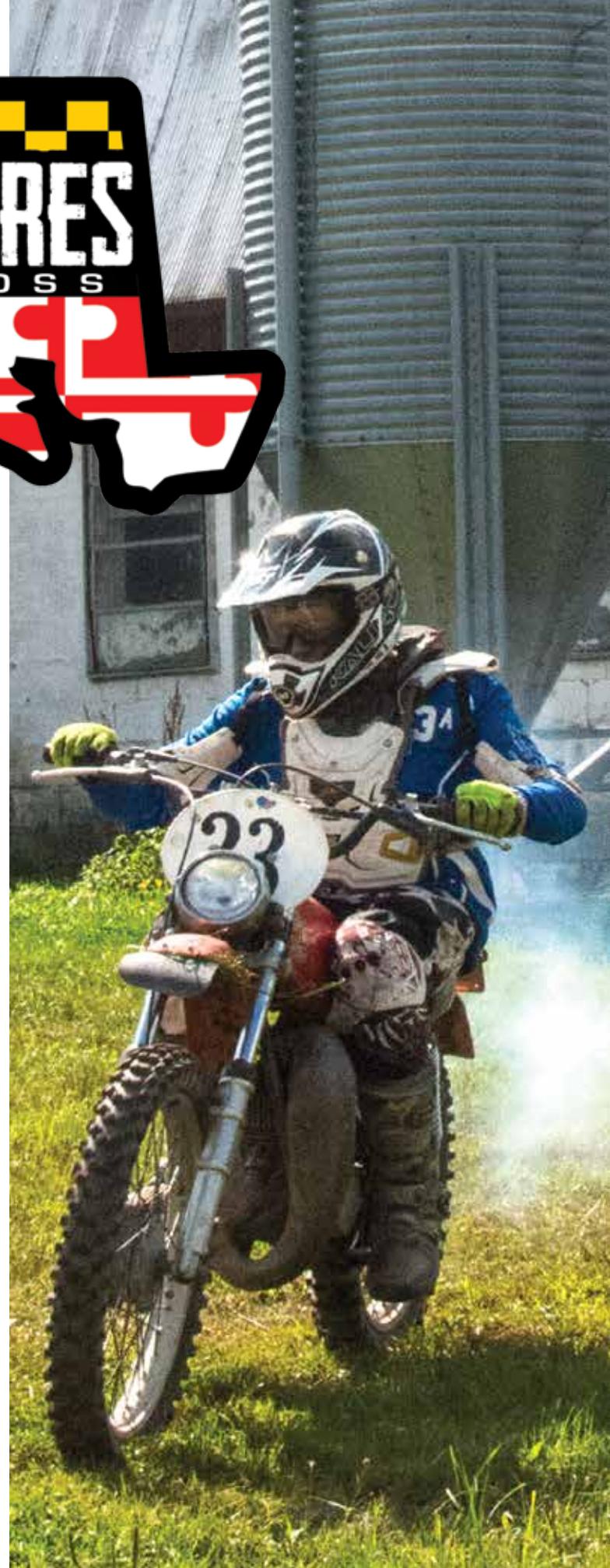
Written by: **Mary Reisinger**
Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**

Tim Thomas grew up on a dairy farm near Friendsville in Western Maryland's Garrett County, but his passion has always been for anything with a motor, especially dirt bikes. In 1996, Tim's mother gave him a Honda CR125 as a graduation present with the stipulation that the wheels not leave the ground. Unable to resist temptation, he abandoned his farm chores to try his first motocross race in West Virginia, and he became a devotee of the sport.

In 2010, Tim and his wife Paula, who own a timber company, became third generation owners of the 175 acre farm, which they have transformed from milk production to motocross venue. They kept the name Shady Acres that Tim's father Rusty had given the farm, as a tribute to him. When they built the track in 2013, Tim and Paula set a goal: to host a national meet within ten years. They did it in half that time. They have been surprised by how quickly their motocross park has become popular. In fact, during peak race season, they sometimes have difficulty getting to their timber business.

Shady Acres Motocross Park offers two courses. The motocross track caters to those who like jumping and fast speeds; it is full of lengthy jumps, tight turns, loamy berms, and fast straightaways. The four mile woods course is for those who prefer wooded terrain, tight technical single track, and steep hill climbs.

**Exiting the dairy barn during
the cross country race.**





Warming up the engines for the start of the cross country race.

Each year, Tim and Paula schedule a motocross series that usually consists of eight races, and a grand prix series of three races. Local and regional riders from roughly ages 3 to 65, both male and female, take part in these races. Classes based on bike type and skill levels from novices to professionals are available.

In 2018, Shady Acres held AHRMA events for the first time. With over 3,000 members, the American Historic Racing Motorcycle Association, Ltd., a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving, restoring and competing on classic motorcycles, is the leading vintage racing group in North America and one of the largest in the world. The association's enthusiastic membership reflects this country's strong interest in classic bikes. Round 12 of the AHRMA 2018 Preston Petty Products National Motocross Series, Round 11 of the AHRMA 2018 Race Tech National Post Vintage Motocross Series, and Round 7 of the AHRMA 2018 John Penton/Preston Petty National Cross Country Series took place at Shady Acres on July 28 & 29.

The 2018 AHRMA races saw riders on the woods course handling off road terrain, ranging from crossing bridges,

to skirting ponds, to trekking through the family dairy. Average lap time on an antique bike was around ten minutes. Other racers navigated the motocross course with its sharp turns, steep uphill, multiple jumps of lengths

ranging up to 80 feet long, and several whoop-di-do sections where the rugged "washboard" surface presents a special challenge.

The 262 AHRMA riders came from all over the United States. The oldest racer was an 86-year-old from New York. Another octogenarian drove in from Michigan with his wife, while a slightly younger participant from Oregon had to finish his lawn work before his wife would let him leave for Shady Acres. The oldest bike competing was a 1930 Indian; due to the historic nature of this

association, even the newest bikes were from the 1980s.

For this special race weekend, members of Oakland Chapter 67 of the Eastern Star prepared food and drinks, including a traditional sausage gravy and biscuit breakfast, and donated the proceeds to the Shriners' Hospital.

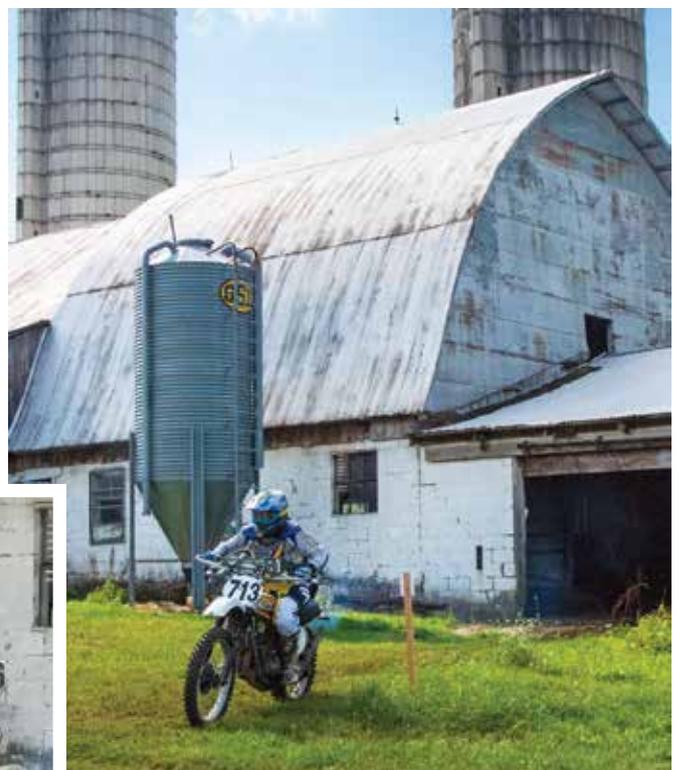
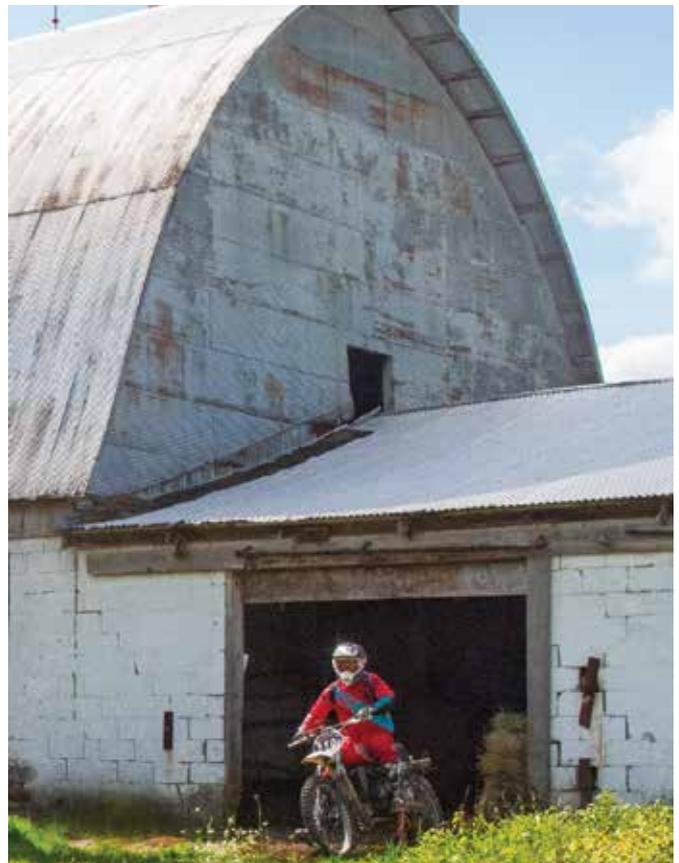
Local riders usually drive in for the day, but some participants coming from a distance, particularly for two-day



Catching air on the table top jump.

events, camp out on the farm, sleeping in trucks, campers, or recreational vehicles. Others rent houses or hotel rooms in the area. Many families enjoy this activity and getting to know other families who become friends. It is a congenial crowd; competitors will fist bump and then try their best to win.

Whether you prefer to be a spectator or a competitor, you are welcome to visit Shady Acres Motocross Park. Spectators pay \$10 a day to watch the races. Racers who want to improve their times or physical conditioning can come and train for a reasonable fee on non-race weekends from noon to 5 p.m. A website is being constructed, but in the meantime, check Shady Acres' FaceBook page for information about upcoming competitions.

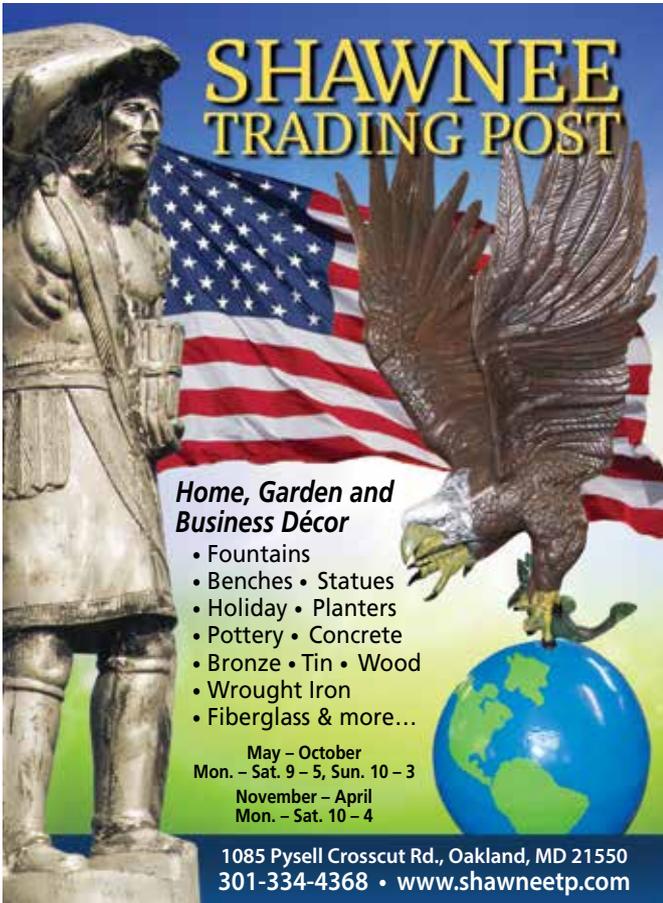


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South Facade Renovation Underway at Allegany Museum

Written by: **Shelby Calhoun**
Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**



Above: Installation of new lettering and lighting on south side entrance of Allegany Museum.

Inset: Original copper light from Memorial Hospital.

Developing a museum is an open-ended project. The initial vision of a dedicated group comes to fruition while at the same time additional opportunities of growth and expansion develop. The establishment of Allegany Museum has been set, and has continued, with new and exciting pieces of area history for many years.

With the acquisition of the neo-classical revival Post Office building at 3 Pershing Street, Cumberland, Maryland, built in 1932, moving the museum to its second floor location was one of the first steps to take in what has become a tremendous undertaking.

Fueled by Capital Improvement Bond Bills, grants, donations and volunteer hours, the interior of the building has expanded the museum to now encompass both the 1st and 2nd floors. Many architectural details have been discovered and renovated to show the grandeur of the building, while displays highlight the area's history, industry, growth, transportation and more.

Exterior work on the building is currently underway with three phases of progression planned:



Phase 1 – Signage and Lighting

- “Allegany Museum” in all caps along the top of the building
- LED Lighting
- Installation of the letters and lighting

Phase 2 – New South Side Entrance

- Utilizing 1929 Indiana Sandstone entrance from Memorial Hospital
- Original Copper Light from Memorial Hospital
- 2 original free-standing lights from the Decatur Street Allegany Hospital/Sacred Heart Hospital

Phase 3 - Landscaping

- Revitalization of parking lot and curbing
- Standardization of signage
- Enlarging alley

While volunteering at the museum's welcoming desk, Rolfe Singerman was asked by Gary Bartik, the museum's president, if he would like to donate to Phase 1 of the south facade. Gary noted "as soon as some funding is available the lettering and night lighting can be installed." Light heartedly, Rolfe replied, "Let me know what a sign like that would cost." It was just a few days later that Gary advised Rolfe of the amounts needed for the lettering and lighting. Rolfe says, "I looked at the numbers, took a deep breath, and told Gary, 'Let's do it!'"

With Phase 1 now complete, a ride through Cumberland along I-68 presents an impressive sight. Rolfe feels strongly that people visiting Cumberland, or living nearby, should have a visual reminder, as they travel through town, of the exceptional nature of this quality museum's display of area history. Visiting the museum is a walk down memory lane



Artist rendition of completed south side entrance.

for some, and for those visiting it's a look at the many resources and contributions this area has held.

Opportunities to contribute to the progression of Allegheny Museum exist in many ways and may be discussed with museum staff or through their website.



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A Family Love of History: *Bob Hoye*

Written by: **Mary Reisinger**

For Bob Hoye, a chance meeting in North Carolina led to a firm friendship and an opportunity to honor the uncle who had been his hero in his hometown of Oakland, Maryland.

Robert “Bob” Lincoln Hoye, born in 1925, grew up on a small farm along the Youghiogheny River, just outside Oakland in Garrett County, Maryland. He walked to school in town until his family moved to Morgantown, West Virginia, during his high school years. Bob enlisted in the Army at seventeen and served during WWII in North Africa and Italy as a member of the 248th Field Artillery.

On his return to civilian life, he earned a GED and enrolled in West Virginia University on the GI Bill, received a degree in Business Administration from the College of Business and Economics, and launched a career in which he worked at DuPont Corporation, Weyerhaeuser, Carborundum Metals, and for 25 years, at Borg-Warner Chemicals.

Before the war, Bob had met Betty Sass who had grown up in a coal mining family in Pricedale, Pennsylvania, before her family moved to Morgantown. She did clerical work for Curtis-Wright in Buffalo, New York, during the war, and then moved back to Morgantown, where she and Bob married. Betty and Bob had three children, Karen, Robert Jr., and Charles. The family moved to various states including Delaware, West Virginia, California, and Ohio. Betty and Bob lived in more than twenty houses. Bob loved to fix up houses and then sell them. He always said, “When the paint’s dry, it’s time to move.”

Her children remember Betty (who had Hungarian ancestry) as a beautiful woman, wonderful mother, excellent homemaker, and great cook. Bob cooked also. He continued the traditional practice of canning, and his daughter especially treasures his recipes for sweet pepper relish (mixed with sharp cheese and mayonnaise to stuff celery), hummingbird cake, and apple cake.



Bob Hoye at Hoye’s Crest on Backbone Mountain, Maryland’s highest natural point at 3,360 feet. The point was named in memory of Bob’s uncle, Charles Hoye.

Inset: Bob and Betty Hoye.



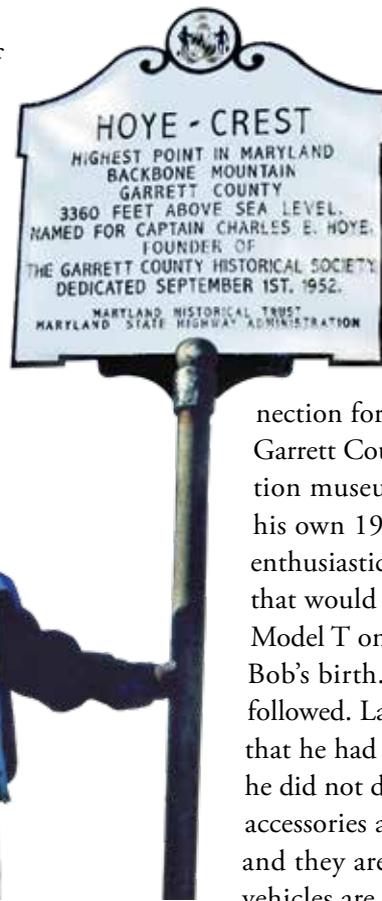
Bob remained fond of Garrett County all his years. He took his family to reunions and frequently rented vacation homes on Deep Creek Lake. His son recalls that during every vacation they always made a visit to the family cemetery near Sang Run. From the graveyard, Bob would look across the hill that had been part of the early family farm his uncle had promised to leave to him before his untimely death in 1951. Bob would wistfully say, “That could have been mine.”

When Bob retired, he and Betty moved to New Bern, North Carolina. It was there, in a Methodist church, that he met Bob and Leanna Boal, who were vacationing in New Bern. When Bob Hoye asked Bob Boal where they were from, Bob Boal said from a little town in Maryland that Bob Hoye wouldn’t have heard of. Of course when Bob Hoye learned that this little town was the place where he had grown up, he was surprised. In an even more serendipitous twist, he found that Bob Boal had a leading role in the Garrett County Historical Society, the organization founded in 1941 by his much-loved Uncle Charles.

Bob's uncle, Charles Hoyer, did a great deal of historical research. Among his writings was a book about the earliest Colonial settlers in the western edge of Maryland: *Hoye's Pioneer Families of Garrett County*. The earliest Hoyer in the area was Paul Hoyer, who surveyed many tracts of land in what is now Garrett County before being interrupted by the Revolutionary War. After serving in the war, Paul was able to obtain "patents" on several thousand acres of land in the area.

One of Paul's four children was William Waller Hoyer (1768-1836), also a surveyor, who fathered 21 children, and settled several large farms in the area around Sang Run. Paul's other son, John, was also a land speculator; by the time he died in 1849, he owned over 50,000 acres of land in Western Maryland and nearby counties of Virginia. According to a story told about another settler, George Rhinehart, when neighbors were discussing the possibility of mountains on the moon, Rhinehart said he didn't believe there were mountains on the moon because if there were, "John Hoyer would have patented them."

A century later, in September of 1952, Hoyer's Crest on Backbone Mountain, at 3,360 feet the highest natural



Bob Hoyer, in his early nineties, hiked for the first time to Hoyer's Crest, along with Bob Boal and other friends from the Historical Society.

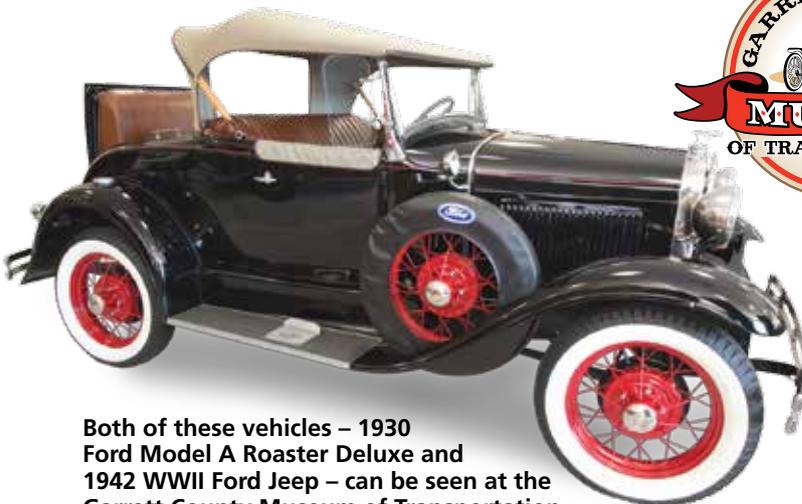
point in Maryland, was named in memory of a descendant of these early Hoyes, Charles Hoyer, a man who had been interested enough in history not only to write several books about the first settler families in the area, but also to organize and head the Garrett County Historical Society.

Meeting the Boals established a connection for Bob and Betty to historic preservation in Garrett County. When Bob learned that a transportation museum was being planned, he offered to lend his own 1930 Ford Model A deluxe roadster and enthusiastically joined in the search for other vehicles that would enhance the collection. He located a Ford Model T one ton truck produced in 1925, the year of Bob's birth. A 1925 Ford Model T pickup runabout followed. Later he found a 1942 Ford Jeep of the type that he had driven when he was in the Army. Though he did not do the restoration, Bob delighted in finding accessories as a finishing touch for these automobiles, and they are in pristine condition. All four of these vehicles are on exhibit at the Transportation Museum in Oakland. Two are on loan, but the two Ford trucks are gifts in memory of Bob's Uncle Charles.

Bob and Betty were generous donors and active members of the Garrett County Historical Society. They also formed a deep and lasting friendship with the Boals. After Betty's death, Bob and his second wife Rose continued to participate in keeping local history accessible to new generations. Bob died in April 2018, but he will long be remembered for the legacy he left in the county where his family roots are so deep.



**Garrett County Museum of Transportation
108 E. Liberty St., Oakland, MD 21550**



Both of these vehicles – 1930 Ford Model A Roaster Deluxe and 1942 WWII Ford Jeep – can be seen at the Garrett County Museum of Transportation.



Russell (standing) of Russell Military Vehicles, restored this 1942 Ford Jeep for owner Bob Hoyer (driver's seat).

Come Celebrate Our 30 Years!



Written by: **John Garner & Tyler Clayton**
Photos courtesy WMSR

Thirty years ago, large industry started leaving the area. Cas Taylor and others were concerned for the region's economic structure. The brain trust envisioned the creation of a "scenic" railroad, akin to the success of the Cass Scenic Railroad located in Cass, West Virginia. This concept would be the cornerstone for the future of Allegany County. They formed a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization called the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad Development Corporation. Knowing the Chessie System Railroad was liquidating rail lines they no longer found valuable, the entrepreneurs approached the Chessie management to see if the Corporation would donate the ex-Western Maryland Railway Company (then forged into the Chessie System Railroad) main line railroad from Cumberland to Frostburg to the newly formed not-for-profit corporation. Chessie agreed to do so.

With the formation of the development corporation, the goal was to find an operator, a company that would be hired to make repairs to the railroad and operate trains. Jack Showalter was hired to be the operator. He brought his Allegany Central Railroad equipment to Cumberland. He brought his two steam locomotives to pull the passenger

train up the mountain. At that time, heritage steam operations were a rarity...even more so today. After the years of the Allegany Central, the WMSR brought in Sheridan Rail to operate the railroad. Sheridan Rail used heritage Alco brand diesels to pull the passenger train to Frostburg. With the cost associated with finding an operator, the WMSR decided to become the operator for the 1993 season. Hiring an appropriate staff, the railroad acquired a steam locomotive that would soon become the famed "Mountain Thunder." Heritage diesel locomotives were acquired from Conrail. Not too long after the railroad acquired the locomotives, passenger equipment was acquired from various sources. Mountain Thunder would toil on its job until April, 2016. The Federal Railroad Administration guidelines state that a steam locomotive must undergo a mandatory rebuild program every 15 years – or 1472 days. And now, present day, the GP-30 Diesel Engine still works the mountain on operating days with a typical eight car consist of heritage coach and dining cars.

Since our last article, we are very excited to announce that work has resumed on the ex-Chesapeake and Ohio steam

locomotive, 1309. It was the last steam locomotive built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia for domestic service. Thisallet-type, 2-6-6-2 steam locomotive successfully passed its hydrostatic test in June and machining and fabrication of parts continues. We are very optimistic that steam will return on the mountain in 2019 in the form of “Maryland Thunder.”

As we continue to move full steam ahead, we have a variety of events for the old and young alike. We have recently been voted the “Best Date Spot in Maryland” by the Daily Meal. We operate an evening dinner train; we are one of a handful of heritage railroads that stores, preps, cooks and serves meals on board the train – this is not a catered affair! Along with dinner, pending the schedule, our guests can enjoy a Family Pizza Train, Murder Mystery, Wine and Cheese or even a Mountain Moonshine excursion. Our dinner train now operates all year long!!

Do not care for lunch or dinner aboard the train? Our new lounge service aboard the “Will’s Creek Tavern” lounge car might be the perfect fit for you. It is for our guests over 21 who appreciate an adult beverage and light hors d’oeuvres in a mid-century décor setting. Our staff will make sure you are well pampered during the excursion.

October is one of the three months of the year that finds our station platforms full of faces in search of the fall foliage experience. During this time, our trains operate every day except Mondays. If you are looking for a colorful time of the year to ride, there is no time like October!

Then, in mid-November, we begin decorating the stations and operating our WinterLand on the Western Maryland Christmas Trains. November and December find our railroad amidst a magical experience of Christmas magic. From the interactions with Santa and Mrs. Claus, reindeer games and more: there is something for the entire family! We have been told that many families hold our holiday trains as a staple in their family traditions. Last year, we had the pleasure of meeting a few families that have been returning guests for many years! That is tradition!!

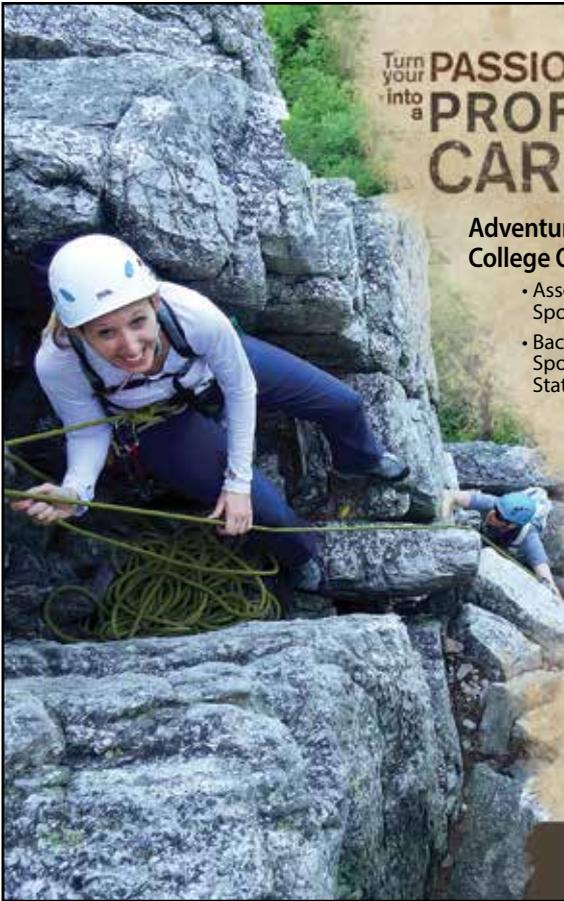
Finishing out the year, we will host our annual New Year’s Eve Murder Mystery train. Featuring a champagne toast at midnight, we invite you to ride the rails with heritage style into 2019!

Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased at WMSR.com!

Come celebrate our 30 years!! See you on the platform!

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