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Featuring the Central Appalachians of Maryland, Pennsylvania,
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Spring/Summer 2024
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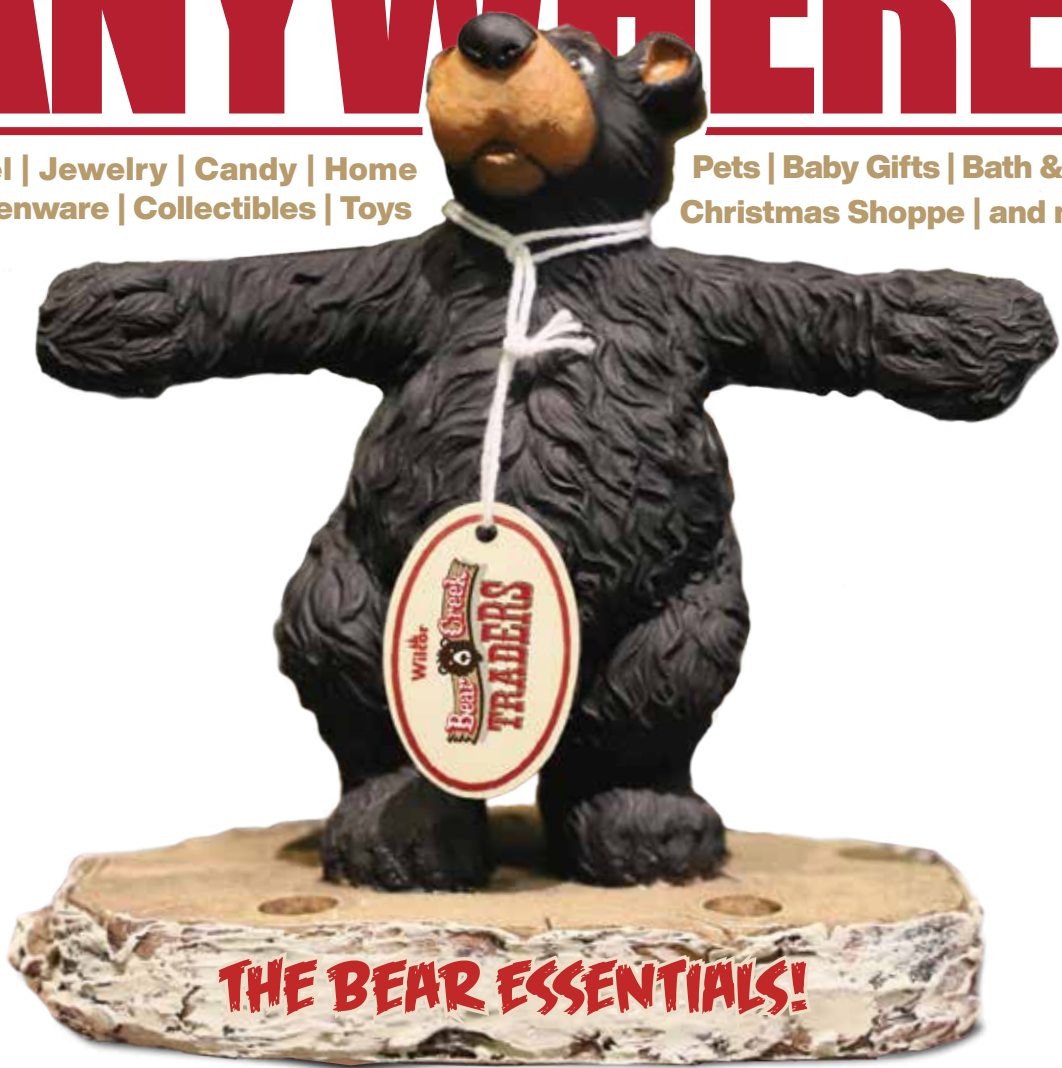
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ON THE COVER

A Black-throated Green Warbler. See "Bird Banding at Dolly Sods" on page 12.

PHOTO BY STEVE SHALUTA



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OOPS! We mislabeled a photo in our last issue.

Storybook Holiday

Deborah Wagner-Brenneman, above, author of *The Perfect Tree for Mrs. B.*, has a new book, *I'll Paint You Another Sky*, coming in 2024. It is dedicated to her sister, Jeanie, who passed away after a courageous battle with cancer.

This photo (identified as the author) is actually the illustrator of *The Perfect Tree for Mrs. B.*, **Melinda Bishoff**.

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Wildom Farm

ONE FARMER'S COMMITMENT TO REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE
NEAR DEEP CREEK LAKE, MARYLAND

Written by: **Mary Reisinger**



Julie Friend sits in the meadow with a few of her grass-fed cattle. PHOTO BY JEFF SWENSEN

Julie Friend has family roots in Western Maryland and grew up in Western Pennsylvania, but her path to Wildom Farm in Garrett County, Maryland, led through Chicago. Julie went to college in Pittsburgh, where she started a job with Nordstrom Department Store that took her to Cincinnati, and then on to Chicago.

By the time she was living in Chicago, Julie had started to notice that there was a lot of waste and overconsumption in the fashion industry, and this piqued her interest in sustainable living. She began to explore thrift shops for clothes, and ultimately opened a vintage clothing business, saving clothes that would otherwise be discarded, and demonstrating the benefits of wearing clothes without harmful dyes and chemicals.

There was a farmers' market close to her Chicago apartment, and she began to shop there, only going to the grocery store for staple items she couldn't get at the market. Julie enjoyed talking to the producers of the food she was eating and knowing how it was grown. She cooked with whole foods and saw her health improve. Convinced that what we put into our bodies affects how we feel and function, Julie completed a nine-month course with the Nutritional Therapy Association, becoming certified as a nutritional therapy practitioner.

As Julie's commitment to a sustainable lifestyle grew, her parents acquired a farm in Garrett County that had belonged to Julie's grandfather. For years the fields had been farmed conventionally in corn and soybean rotation; Julie and her

parents began to wonder about the chemicals being used in the fields. The farm was in an area that was not only familiar to them, but also had large numbers of visitors each year. Julie became intrigued with the idea of practicing regenerative agriculture in a rural community that could provide many customers. Julie and her parents saw this as an opportunity to steward the land in a different, more natural way.

With her parents' support, Julie moved to the property on Sang Run Road in February of 2020. Almost immediately the pandemic shut down everything that she might have missed about being in a city, and she was happy to be living comfortably with plenty of space. Julie set about creating an environment that encourages biodiversity and healthy natural systems. Her aim is to produce food in a way that is good for the animals, good for the land, and good for the consumer. Animal welfare, ecology, and human health are pillars of her philosophy. She chose the name Wildom Farm to reflect the integration of wild and domestic elements in farm life.

That first year, Julie began with 10 pigs, 500 meat chickens, 100 layers, and 50 turkeys. Initially, she wasn't very excited about raising pigs. However, she knew that at nearby Backbone Farm, pigs were being raised in the woods, and she could get some piglets from them. Since Wildom Farm has 60 acres of woodland, it seemed a worthwhile experiment. She has enjoyed watching the pigs follow their natural instincts to root and eat acorns, seeing how content they are, and observing how well they fit into the environment. Now pigs are her favorite animal on the farm.

Julie and her employees have worked to transition 90 acres of corn and soy into perennial pasture for the grazing animals. The farm uses movable fencing to rotate animals into different areas, allowing months for rejuvenation of each



Julie has carefully chosen breeds of cattle, pigs, chickens, and sheep that thrive in their pasture and woodland homes.

PHOTOS BY JULIE FRIEND



As cattle, sheep, and chickens are moved to new areas of the pasture, their mobile feeding station and chicken coop go with them. On hot days, a wide canopy can be stretched from the feeding station to the coop, providing shade from the sun.

TOP PHOTO BY JEFF SWENSEN, LEFT PHOTO BY MARY REISINGER

section before it is used again. The chickens roost at night in coops that Julie calls egg-mobiles; solar-controlled doors automatically open in the morning so that the chickens can spend the day outside. At this point, Wildom has 40 cattle, 75 pigs, 80 sheep, 1500 meat chickens, 75 laying chickens, and 100 turkeys.

The farm has been expanding from its focus on meats to including more garden produce. The first garden plot was cleared by pigs rooting in it and then chickens having a turn at further processing the soil and insects.

Julie tries to use products that might normally be discarded. For example, sheep's wool is used for several purposes,

including as mulch on the garden, and sheep hides are tanned. Pig lard is refined and used as an ingredient in skin moisturizer.

There are always challenges to overcome, such as predators who appreciate a good chicken dinner.

Regenerative agriculture demands continual attention to best practices for housing and feeding livestock and keeping them healthy. Fortunately, Julie's background in nutrition, her ability to do research, and her efforts to learn about the practical skills of sustainable farming have equipped her to solve problems when they occur.

In another piece of luck, Julie's family farm already had ample buildings to use for machinery and other necessities of farm life. In one of them, Julie has a small shop where she sells farm products that include grassfed beef and lamb; pasture-raised chicken and turkey; eggs; forest-raised pork; lard-based moisturizer; dog treats; and more.



Wildom Farm's stand can be found at the Deep Creek Lake Farmers' Market held at Garrett College on Friday afternoons, where pork burgers are a big hit; at a Pittsburgh farmers' market on Tuesdays; and occasionally at the Oakland Farmers' Market on Saturday mornings. It is also possible to order some products online. Julie rents space in a commercial kitchen now, but in the future, she plans to build a commercial kitchen at the farm so that she can prepare food on site. Julie says that cooking led her to the farm and the farm has led her back to the kitchen.

Julie has held several popular farm dinners with ingredients from the farm or sourced locally. Sometimes these dinners are followed by a demonstration of butchery. Julie notes that it's very educational for people to see how few skirt steaks can be cut per cow and how little bacon there is in a single pig. Look for these events to be held starting in May and June, and if you're interested, reserve your place early; they always sell out.

Left: The early spring vegetable garden has sheep's wool mulch in some rows.

Top right: The two tom turkeys strut—walk slowly while raising and rattling their tail features—to attract attention from the hens.

Above: The pigs at Wildom Farm have a hearty appetite for whey, a byproduct of the cheesemaking process at Firefly Farms in Accident, Maryland.

PHOTOS BY MARY REISINGER

Julie has also staged a few kitchen takeovers, where Wildom Farm does the cooking for a day in a restaurant. Again, as much as possible, Julie uses ingredients from her farm or other local sources.



Guests enjoy one of Wildom Farm's outdoor dinners.

PHOTO BY JESSICA FIKE

Because of Wildom Farm's approach to agriculture, it has recently received ecological outcome verification (EOV) from the Savory Institute. This is an annual certification; each year the organization will look for an increase in biodiversity of animal species, insects, ground covers, etc. It is a continual form of monitoring that is helpful both for the farmer and for the consumer.

Julie loves the beauty and vitality of Garrett County. In her time here, she has found some keys to a sustainable way of life that she is eager to share. Wildom Farm offers farm tours, farm yoga, dinners, demonstrations, and wholesome food products. To check store hours and the events calendar, and to learn more, contact Julie at 724-494-5259 or visit the website: www.wildomfarm.com.

Wildom Farm is in the McHenry area, at 6675 Sang Run Road, opposite Mountain State Brewing Company. Look for the Wildom Farm sign.



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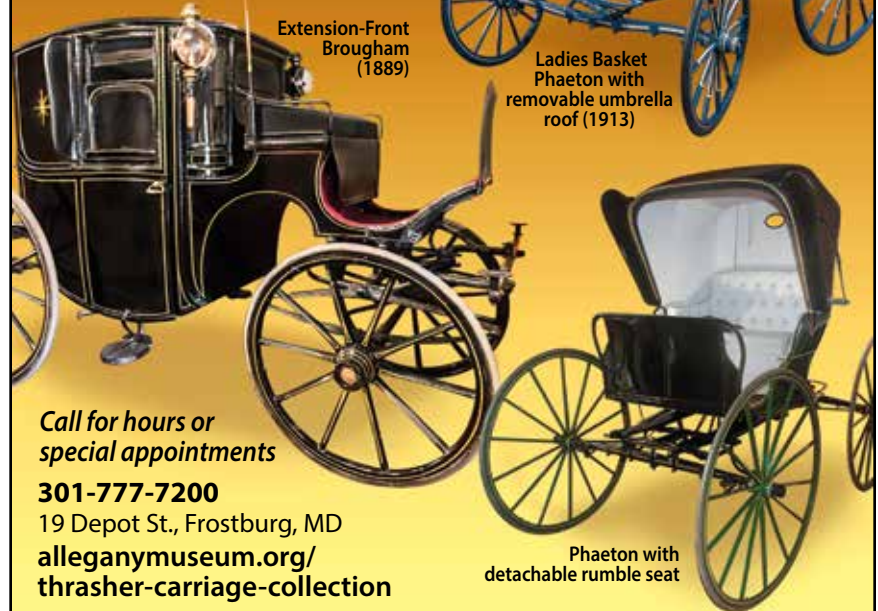
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Bird Banding at Dolly Sods

THE ALLEGHENY FRONT MIGRATION OBSERVATORY
HAS BEEN BANDING BIRDS IN THE ALLEGHENY MOUNTAINS
OF WEST VIRGINIA SINCE 1958

Written by: **Mary Reisinger**



The view from the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory at Dolly Sods

PHOTO BY SHELBY CALHOUN

Every morning from late August until early October, volunteers at Dolly Sods move about the breezy ridge tending mist nets and collecting data on birds that are banded and released. The weather can be harsh: rain and even snow might require keeping the nets closed. On clear days, however, this 3870-foot height has a breath-taking view that extends over a deep valley to seven ridges in the distance. It is a magical place to see the important process of bird banding, and visitors are welcome.

The Allegheny Front Migration Observatory (AFMO) started banding birds in 1958. It is a superb location, directly in the migratory flight path of many birds leaving northern forests to winter in distant southern climes, and home to an array of other local birds who don't travel as far. In a typical season, 3000 birds will be banded in less than two months. Over the years, the AFMO has banded more than 300,000 birds.



The largest number of birds banded at AFMO are warblers such as the Black-throated Blue (above) and the Cape May (right). PHOTOS BY STEVE SHALUTA

Dolly Sods, a high plateau of the Allegheny Mountains in eastern West Virginia, was at one time covered in ancient hemlocks and spruces. Early settlers, such as the Dahle family (whose surname sounded like Dolly), took advantage of existing open areas (called “sods”) and cleared additional space for fields. When rail lines were built nearby, logging intensified, and between the 1880s and the 1920s, much of the forest was removed, leading to exposure of the thick humus that had been beneath the trees. This remaining vegetation was vulnerable to wildfire, which further denuded the land.

In the 1940s, the U.S. Army chose Dolly Sods for an artillery training range because the place was so relatively uninhabited. It is worth noting that though efforts have been made to clear the munitions, campers and hikers are still warned to stay on the trails and to report any suspicious items they see.





Above: LeJay Graffious, Dawn Fox, and Jackie Burns (left to right) at the seasonal hut on the ridge.

PHOTO BY MIKE CALHOUN

Left: The AFMO bands more Blackpoll Warblers than all other banding stations combined.

PHOTO BY STEVE SHALUTA



This rugged landscape of exposed rocks, native shrubs, and “flagged” spruce trees (whose branches grow mostly on the east side away from the prevailing west wind) has been compared to a moonscape, but it is rich with flora and fauna that survived the fires or emerged afterward. In 1975, it was designated by Congress as a wilderness and scenic area. It is part of the Monongahela National Forest managed by the U. S. Forest Service.

Early efforts to observe birds here focused on hawks; these birders soon noticed that there were also thrushes and warblers in large numbers. George A. Hall, a professor of chemistry and wildlife, with a special interest in birds, started banding birds in this part of Dolly Sods. As editor of the *Wilson Journal of Ornithology* and author of *West Virginia Birds: Distribution & Ecology* (1983), he lent specialist scientific knowledge to the project. The AFMO itself traces its beginning to Ralph Bell, who obtained permits for an official bird banding station in 1958. Nets were initially set up in what is now the Red Creek Campground. George Hall recounted stories of cattle whose horns became entangled in the nets.



Above: Dawn Fox (left) and Jackie Burns (right) furl the mist nets at the end of banding.
Inset: The mist nets are nearly invisible. PHOTOS BY MARY REISINGER



Banding operations were transferred to the present site of the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory (AFMO) when Bell noticed birds streaming past a short distance away. He hiked over to the ridge line and decided to set up nets there; this turned out to be such a successful location that it remains in use today, staffed solely by volunteers. Due to insurance, all volunteers are members of the Brooks Bird Club, which oversees the station.

Livestock were removed from the property when it became a wilderness and scenic area, so they were not blundering into the nets, but they had served to keep trees and shrubs low enough for the nets to be effective. Without the grazing animals, the vegetation grew higher than the net poles and

greatly reduced the number of birds that flew into the nets. Tom Fox, a volunteer, worked with the U.S. Forest service to clear cut the area around the nets, and banding numbers rose again.

Originally, people staffing the station used a cave just below the ridge line in inclement weather. Steps were built down to it, and a handrail was installed to make it safer. This cave is still used on occasion.

In 1981, George Hall asked LeJay Graffious if he knew anyone who could build a hut to place near the center of the net array, and LeJay said he could do it. He designed and constructed a three-sided hut that could be transported in pieces in the back of a pickup truck and assembled on site. When he noticed that the wind blew a lot of dust into the hut, he added a floor and work surfaces. This same hut continues to be used today. LeJay appreciates



help when it is time to disassemble it and take it to the storage building provided by the staff of Monongahela National Forest. Kevin Dodge, a naturalist in Garrett County, now brings some of his students from Garrett College to assist.

At the AFMO, the focus is on the fall migration. In 2023, bird banding started on August 26 and ended on October 12. Staying open into October, when possible, adds to sightings of birds such as sparrows and kinglets that migrate later. The hut is set up the first day, brush is cleared as necessary, and the site is in operation until the hut is taken down on the final day. The site is staffed every day, weather permitting. Some volunteers commute to the station when they can; others live at the nearby Red Creek Campground for part or all of the season. In 2024, the anticipated opening date is August 25. The closing date will likely be around the end of September or early in October. One place to look for up-to-date information is at the Facebook group “Mountain State Birders—WV.”

Banding is done from before dawn until noon, the hours when birds are most active. The mist nets are opened early; at noon, the nets are completely furled so as not to be a hazard to birds when no one is minding the site. Birds that enter the nets are gently extricated by volunteers into individual paper bags with a twist at the top to keep them inside. At the hut, the birds are weighed within the bag on a scale set to subtract the weight of the bag. The net tenders write the species on the bag. As soon as the bird is removed from the bag, the species is confirmed and a lightweight, durable band with a unique 9-digit number is attached to one leg. Then a series of other details are noted. The bander measures the wing and the tail, assessing feathers while measuring, and attempts to determine the gender, age, and condition of each bird.

This work requires training, experience, and knowledge. People interested in becoming banders must be qualified

Each bird is fitted with a numbered band.

PHOTOS BY MIKE CALHOUN

to apply for a permit. The person banding has to have learned how to hold the bird correctly and how to interpret the evidence of feathers and bones. Bone formation (ossification) helps identify the age of the bird. Newly hatched birds do not yet have the double layer of skull with connecting struts that they will later develop. If only a single layer is present, it is transparent enough to reveal blood vessels that identify it as a young bird. Another developmental indicator is pneumatization—air forming within the bones to make them strong and light. Similarly, feathers provide evidence of age and gender by their molt pattern, size, and color.

Naturally, an essential skill is to accurately identify the bird species being banded. For instance, banders at Dolly Sods see two subspecies of juncos—some are more local and others migrate much further. The difference lies in their size and the color of their beaks and legs. Some birds have different colored plumage in winter and summer. The volunteers at AFMO by necessity acquire extensive familiarity with the many types of birds they encounter.

Most of these birds are passerines—birds that perch—a category that includes more than half of all birds. Most passerines have three toes pointing forward and one pointing backward to enable them to grasp branches from two sides. The most numerous birds banded at AFMO are warblers: Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Blackpoll, Magnolia, and Cape May. Though Blackpoll Warblers are fourth in this list, the AFMO bands a larger number of these birds than all other banding stations combined.

Other birds that are commonly banded include thrushes, sparrows, kinglets, juncos, and chickadees, but as one volunteer puts it, they see everything from hummingbirds to hawks. Even eagles are sighted. Blue jays migrate over Dolly Sods in large numbers, but they avoid nets and are wary of people, so they are seldom banded. Some of the birds in the area are local and don't migrate very far. Others



Measurements and other data are collected.

PHOTOS BY MIKE CALHOUN



Volunteers (l to r): co-director LeJay Graffious, Katie Garst, Taylor Burdette, and co-director Bob Dean displaying the site's 2023 statistics on the final day of the bird banding season in October.

PHOTO BY JOSÉ MARTIN

nest in boreal forests of Alaska, Canada, and the northern United States. The rule of thumb, according to LeJay, is that the birds that migrate from the north go the longest distance for their winter abode, many heading to Central or South America or the Caribbean.

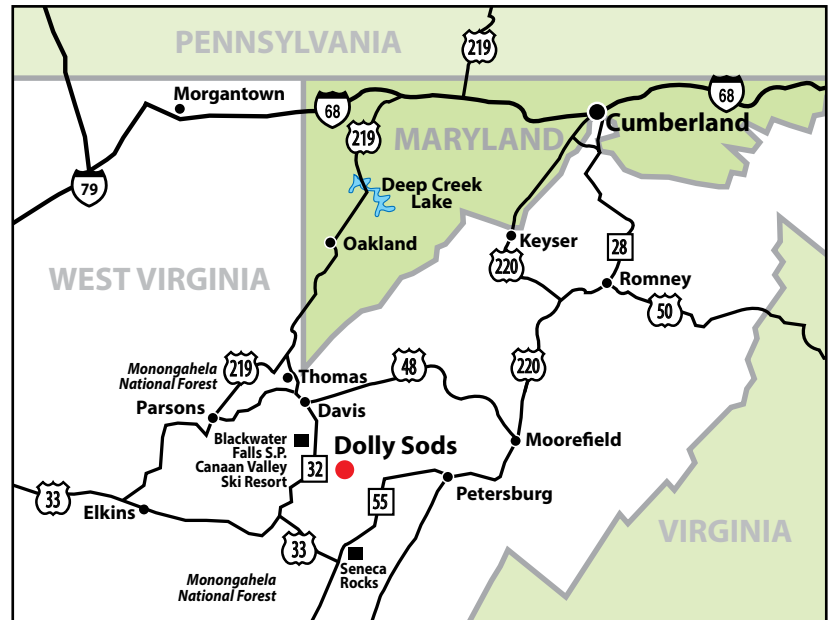
Much is learned about bird populations from the AFMO and other banding stations. Scott Weidensaul, in *Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds*, quotes Jack Connor, who says in *Season at the Point* that almost everything known about birds has been “discovered or proven through banding.” In fact, Connor believes “the numbered leg band has been as important...in the science of avian migration as the telescope has been in planetary astronomy.”

For instance, we know that the weight of most birds is less than it was a few decades ago, and bird populations have generally dropped by 40% in the past 50 years. Scientists are studying possible causes such as pesticides and loss of habitat. It is interesting that Blackpoll Warblers banded at Dolly Sods are seldom banded at stations closer to the coast even though they are preparing for a 4.5 day journey over the ocean to their winter habitat in South America or the Caribbean. Perhaps this is partly due to the diet provided in

the rich habitat of Dolly Sods. These birds need to accumulate significant fat reserves for the long flight ahead.

The data collected all goes to the Bird Banding Lab at the U.S. Geological Survey in Patuxent, Maryland. If you find a banded bird, you should contact www.reportband.gov (to find this if you don't remember the URL, Google “report band”) and report whatever information you have. You will be sent a certificate of appreciation, and you will learn who banded the bird and where it was done.

Birders come to this activity in different ways. The current co-director of the AFMO, LeJay Graffious, has had a life-long interest in nature, including birds, but he traces his involvement with bird banding to an early morning bird walk he took in May 1976. LeJay was in graduate school and had the month of May off. He and his wife decided to spend a weekend at the West Virginia Wildflower Pilgrimage at Blackwater Falls, where the bird walk was offered. The leader of the bird walk was Ralph Bell, who described bird banding. Shortly afterward, Elizabeth Zimmerman, a friend in Morgantown, introduced LeJay to the Dolly Sods bird banding location. Despite working as a school principal, LeJay eventually qualified as a bird bander and spent increasing amounts of time at the AFMO.



The Allegheny Front Migration Observatory is on Forest Road 75 in Dolly Sods, opposite the Red Creek Campground.

PHOTO BY MIKE CALHOUN

Another volunteer, Tom Fox, was a naturalist who took school children on field trips in parks. One girl told him that he should join the Brooks Bird Club because he acted just like the people there. He did join the club, and that resulted in his involvement at Dolly Sods. His wife Dawn is a nurse; she became interested because of Tom. LeJay, Tom, and Dawn—and others—have been volunteering at AFMO for many years. They're eager to share their expertise with newcomers. A good person to contact about the Brooks Bird Club or the banding station is AFMO co-director Bob Dean, at bobdean52@gmail.com.

Watching the process of bird banding is fascinating. It is awe-inspiring to have a close-up glimpse of a wild creature. If you go to the AFMO, check the weather report ahead of time. Be prepared for rough roads within the wilderness area. The walk from the road to the banding station is easy. It's a fairly level and not too lengthy path.

New methods for collecting information about birds are emerging. Tiny cellular, Motus, and GPS transmitters can be attached to the birds. Some of these transmitters are recharged by solar cells. Advances in miniaturization mean that these devices can even be made small enough to be attached to butterflies. The great benefit of transmitters is

that the data is available as soon as the birds pass the towers. This means that individual birds provide a great deal of information. The Motus website (<https://motus.org/>) provides more information about this form of wildlife tracking, including the locations of towers.

Despite these newer technologies, conventional banding remains essential. The goal of LeJay Graffious and others is to ensure that it continues long into the future, so make a visit. Maybe you'll be hooked!

Note: To find the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory, follow directions to the Red Creek Campground in Dolly Sods, on Forest Road 75. Opposite the sign for Blackbird Knob Trail, look for a path. Follow it to the ridge where the banding station is located.





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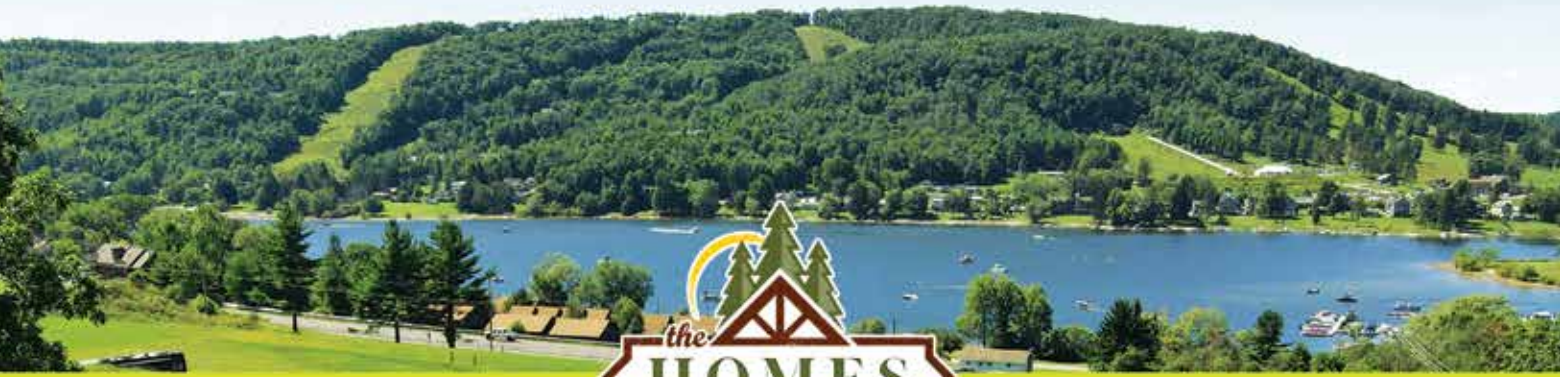
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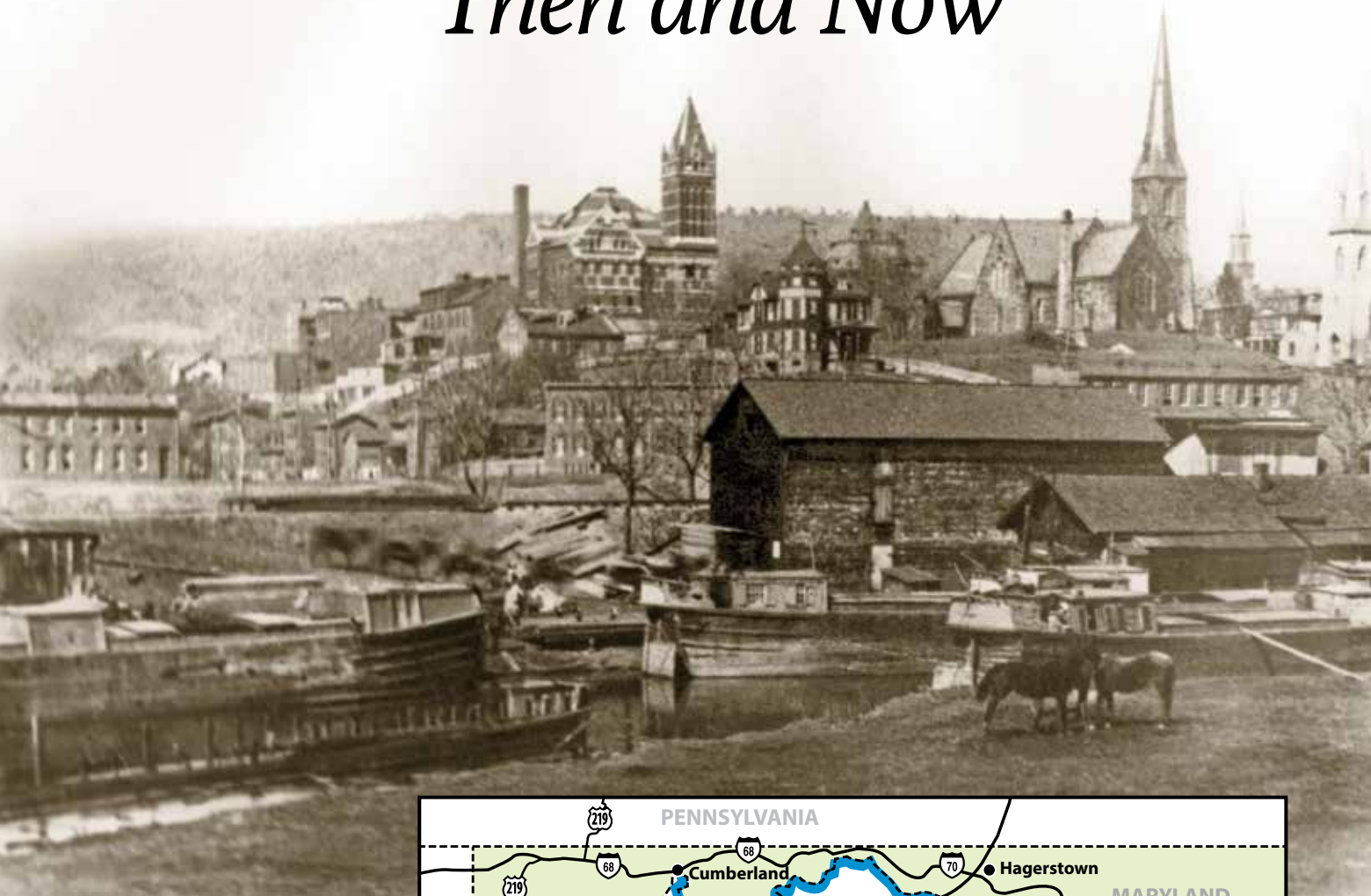
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Chesapeake & Ohio Canal *Then and Now*



Above: C&O Canal terminus, Cumberland, Maryland. The canal reached Cumberland in 1850 serving customers to and from Georgetown.

Written by: **Dan Whetzel**



The Chesapeake & Ohio Canal is marking an important date this year. The transportation system that served customers from Georgetown to Cumberland, MD, came to a disastrous ending 100 years earlier in 1924, when floodwaters swept across the region causing millions of dollars in property damage. Despite efforts to restore the waterway, its demise came nearly a century after construction began, thereby ending employment for workers who plied the famous towpath. A look back at the landmark reveals a remarkable evolution from commercial enterprise to recreational destination.



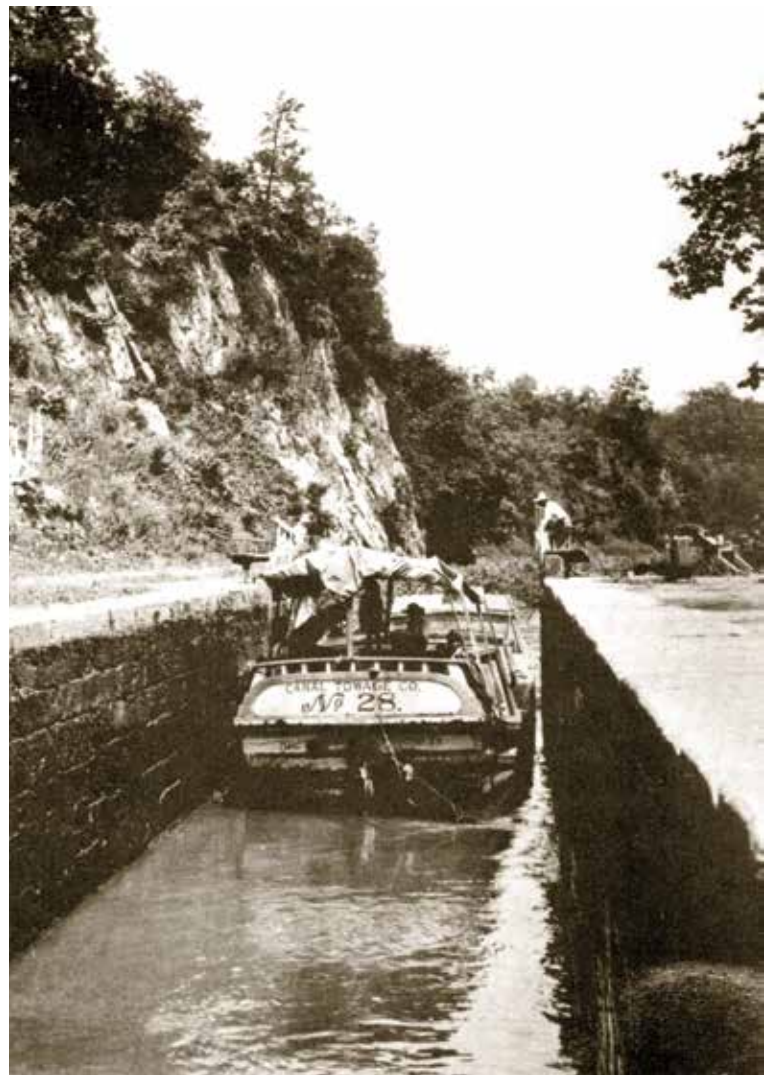
Above: C&O Canal boats waiting to be loaded with coal from Cumberland & Pennsylvania hopper cars.

Right: C&O Canal boat traveling through one of the 74 locks on the way to Tidewater, June 23, 1904.

PHOTO BY ROBERT SHRIVER; COLLECTION OF ELEANOR LEFEVRE HOLZSHU.

The C&O Canal's purpose was to connect the tide-waters of Georgetown with the headwaters of the Ohio River in western Pennsylvania. Commercial purposes prompted the plans. Massive coal deposits along the George's Creek valley in western Maryland were difficult to access and transport—conveyance was primarily limited to carts for roads and small wooden boats navigated by pole wielding men on the Potomac River. It was believed that a canal connecting coal deposits with the eastern seaboard would be financially rewarding. The promising future faced obstacles soon after President John Quincy Adams turned the symbolic first shovel of dirt in 1828.

The canal shared a starting date with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, a carrier that came to be a chief competitor. Initial difficulties came not from the railroad, but with working conditions and engineering challenges. Engineers faced a 605 foot incline over the proposed 184½ mile conduit. To overcome those challenges, 74 locks, 11 aqueducts, more than 250





Baltimore Street, downtown Cumberland, Maryland, during one of the 1924 floods. DAN WHETZEL COLLECTION

culverts, and the Paw Paw tunnel were completed. Continuing problems surfaced when difficult working conditions caused labor shortages. The employment of Irish and German immigrants was intended to address the shortages, but backbreaking work meant that accidents and deaths took a toll on the labor force throughout the entire enterprise. Delays and money shortages also continued to plague construction as it progressed from Georgetown to Cumberland.

Celebrations accompanied the first canal boat entering Cumberland in 1850. Finally, coal was loaded into Cumberland & Pennsylvania Railroad coal hoppers that interchanged with the C&O basin located at the confluence of Will's Creek and the Potomac River. Typically, the loaded canal boats would be pulled by mules for one week until arrival in Georgetown.

Promises of prosperity seemed to be realized into the 1870s as the canal proved to be a viable carrier—coal shipments to the east and assorted goods on the return



trips. But problems began to surface with flooding, particularly in 1889. Engineers designed the canal to be within 100 yards of the Potomac River, a necessary source of water. The proximity of river and towpath came to a catastrophic conclusion in the spring of 1924.

Newspaper reports described the March flooding in graphic terms. While the entire region endured high water, the most damaged sections occurred between Williamsport and Cumberland as streets turned into rivers, pavement disappeared from roadways, and miles of the towpath collapsed

Irish workers were recruited by canal company agents who made deceptive promises about employment. Low pay and miserable living conditions disillusioned the immigrants upon arrival at the work sites. Working conditions became so bad that Irish American newspapers warned their European brothers not apply for canal positions. This monument located at Canal Place in Cumberland, Maryland, is dedicated to those Irish laborers who died building the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal.



Views of another flood on May 12, 1924, at Cumberland, MD — Potomac River (above) and Mechanic and Pershing Streets (below) eventually led to the unofficial end of the Canal. DAN WHETZEL COLLECTION

into the raging waters. The Cumberland basin was particularly hard hit when high water from Will's Creek converged with the swollen Potomac at the work station. A guard wall between the river and canal basin suffered major damage causing water and sediment to flow freely into the area and downstream along the towpath.

An initial report from a C&O official proved to be prophetic. The *Cumberland Evening Times* reported on April 4, 1924, that I.G. Nicholson, general manager, consulted with local contractors and concluded there was no assurance the canal would be restored. Editorial comment added the canal had suffered from diminished importance and the cost of restoring would be prohibitive. The reference to diminished capacity was primarily a result of B&O Railroad service that outpaced the slower boats to Georgetown. Despite the damage and contrary to some references, the C&O Canal did not simply walk away from its operations.

Efforts to repair major damage at the Cumberland basin began when waters receded. A report on April 7, 1924, noted the Vang Construction Company was hauling stone to repair the guard wall. Farther downstream repairs were underway around Williamsport.





Now a National Historical Park, the C&O Canal and towpath is a great outdoor space for hiking, biking, family fun and exercise, as well as other recreational activities at canal towns. PHOTOS BY LANCE BELL



Repairs were necessary not only for canal operations, but also because nearby Kelly-Springfield Tire Company required millions of gallons of water each day to maintain production. A dam located adjacent to the canal basin suffered damage, thereby threatening to lower the water level below intake pipes. Vang Construction dropped ballast into the breach using a steam powered derrick.

In a disastrous turn of events, another flood occurred in May 1924. Newspaper reports described additional damage to the already weakened canal infrastructure. “Flooding in the last 30 days probably destroyed the first inland waterway built in the country.” Another report stated that miles of canal walls between Harpers Ferry and Georgetown were destroyed.

Despite the destruction, Vang Construction continued work in late May, 1924, by utilizing a steam shovel to remove sediment from the Cumberland basin and canal. It was apparent the repairs at various points made possible limited shipping in 1924, but a continuous journey from Cumberland to Georgetown was not possible.

It is unclear when reclamation work ceased, but an announcement in the *Cumberland Evening Times* on August 1, 1924, seemed to mark an unofficial end to business. “The C&O Canal...will not be reopened this year.”

The canal’s future was the subject of speculation over the next several decades. The B&O Railroad that had acquired a majority of canal bonds by 1903 expressed no interest in financing the canal company’s work, so the “Grand Old Ditch” languished. The federal government purchased the canal in 1938 and made limited progress in creating recreational areas, but no efforts were directed to canal trade. The promising outdoor activities took a dark turn when federal officials decided a better use for the towpath would be highway construction—an idea that upset a number of outdoor enthusiasts and environmentalists, including United States Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas.



The C&O Canal terminus in Cumberland, MD, is a busy place where the towpath, Canal Place, Western Maryland Scenic Railroad, and the Western Maryland Station meet the Great Allegheny Passage (a hiking, biking 150 mile rail trail between Pittsburgh, PA, and Cumberland). *PHOTOS BY LANCE BELL*

A highly publicized 8-day walk on the towpath by Douglas and more than 50 friends was largely responsible for turning the political tide from a roadway to national park. In January 1971, the canal was designated a National Historical Park.

The transformation of the C&O Canal from commerce to national park has been remarkable. Five million visitors annually enjoy more than 1,000 historical structures and sites, rare species of plants, wildlife, bicycling, and related enterprises found at “Canal Towns.” The Cumberland terminus has become a major travel destination with the National Historical Park Cumberland Visitors Center hosting interactive displays and programs at Canal Place. Canal attractions also blend with the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad service, Shops at Canal Place, the Great Allegheny Passage, and Allegany Arts Council programs.

Few people surveying the flood damage in 1924 could have imagined what a success the C&O Canal would become a hundred years into the future. Thoughtful planning not only saved the canal, but increased its importance and utility. From canal boats and mules in the 19th century to mountain bicycles and trails in the 21st century, we can reflect on the C&O Canal’s heritage while celebrating its future!

Can you imagine?

The Chesapeake & Ohio Canal’s planned destination never materialized. In 1850, Cumberland became the C&O’s terminus and remained so until operations ceased in 1924. So, what did the original owners have in mind when planning the canal?

A key to reaching the Ohio River headwaters lay in conquering the Allegheny Mountains of Garrett County, Maryland. Engineers would have to design a lock system sufficient to raise boats nearly 2,000 feet from Cumberland’s basin to branches of the Youghiogheny River, a stream that wound its way into the Monongahela, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

The watershed summit was found to be at the location of today’s **Deep Creek Lake**. Small streams, including one called Deep Creek, and the Youghiogheny River would provide a sufficient water supply to keep canal locks operational.

The paths of the canal and Deep Creek Lake never crossed. In fact, work on the lake started in 1925, a year after the canal went out of business. It remains interesting to imagine canal boats crossing Deep Creek Lake on their way to Pennsylvania.

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Bethel A.M.E. Church *Becomes Bethel Center*

Written by: **Mary Reisinger**

HONORING THE HISTORY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS
IN GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND



For nearly ninety years, the bare wooden structure being used as a workshop sat mostly unnoticed in a field near Oakland, Maryland. A small metal sign identified it as the “only African American church in Garrett County.” In 2022, a worship service was held on the farm before the building was dismantled and moved into storage. Since then, the former church has been reassembled on a new location in Mountain Lake Park. It will now be known as Bethel Center.

This unusual saga began in the late 1800s when the B&O Railroad ran train lines through Mountain Lake Park and Oakland and promoted the area as a mountain resort. The census from 1880 shows 12,175 residents of Garrett County; of these, 112 were African Americans, many of whom had come to work for the railroad or the large hotels that served the tourists arriving each summer, while others farmed or ran small businesses in the area.

African Americans formed a congregation a few years before the turn of the century. Details are difficult to verify, but it seems that these families initially



Above: The Bethel A.M.E. Church wooden structure being used as a farm workshop. PHOTO BY MARY REISINGER

Inset: The historic marker at the farm site. PHOTO BY LAURA STUTZMAN

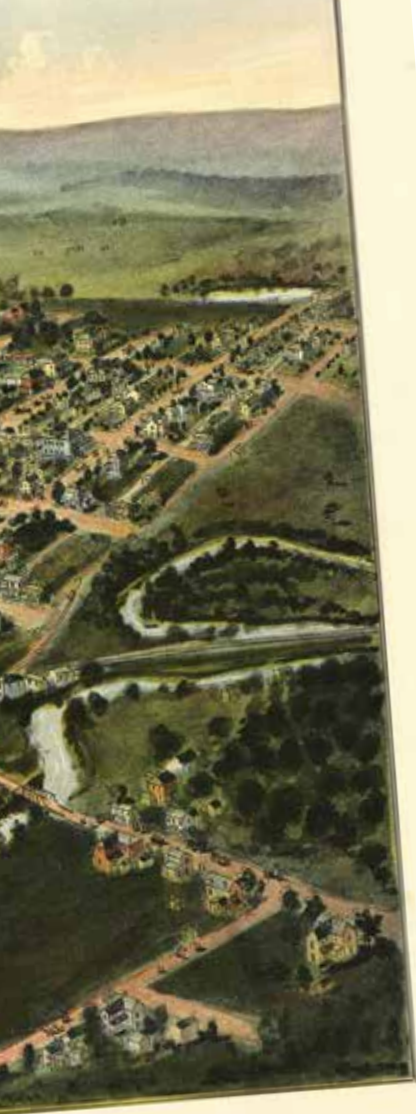


worshipped in a very basic structure. The denominational leaders of the African Methodist Episcopal Church decided this congregation should have a new building, and a lot was purchased in Oakland at the corner of High and Fifth Streets, across from the town cemetery. In 1895, the deed was recorded. The church that was built, Bethel A.M.E., appears on various hand-drawn maps of this era, and on a

bird's-eye view of the town printed in 1906. One postcard has been found that pictures the part of Oakland where Bethel A.M.E. was located.

It has recently been discovered that a Bible still exists from the early days of Bethel A.M.E. It was originally presented to the church by D.H. Loar, a prominent local philanthropist and member of what was then known as St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church. According to a handwritten list inside

this Bible, the first pastor was Rev. W. H. Walker, 1895-96, the year the lot was purchased. Rev. Walker is one of the signatories to the deed. Rev. G. C. Taylor, who was pastor from 1899-1900, is credited by the *Centennial Encyclopaedia of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1816-1916* with overseeing the building of the new structure in Oakland. The list in the Bible stops at the year 1911; however, a 1924 article in the Baltimore *Afro-American* newspaper mentions the



Above: Bethel A.M.E. is visible on the 1906 Bird's-Eye View of Oakland, Maryland, published by Fowler & Kelly, Morrisville, PA; the enlarged inset highlights the church at the corner of High and Fifth Streets.

PHOTO COPIES BY LAURA STUTZMAN

Right: This early postcard of Oakland shows the only known photo of the Bethel A.M.E. building at its original site.

POSTCARD LOCATED BY SALLIE STUART AND PHOTOGRAPHED WITH INSET BY MARK STUTZMAN

congregation being in sound condition due to the work of Rev. M. B. Simpson during his long tenure at Bethel A.M.E.

According to research by local teachers and historians Alice Eary and Jean Grose, a “colored school” was likely housed in the church building until 1907 with enrollment ranging from 15-25 students. Because the enrollment fell below the minimum of 10, it was closed in 1908.

Bethel A.M.E. was part of an active African American community, especially in the early 1900s. The congregation offered social events such as “minstrel” evenings of musical entertainment to the public, and *The Republican* published a weekly social column for residents of color. The paper also records an unusual occurrence: the local chapter of the Ku Klux Klan visited the church in the 1920s during a worship service to deliver a donation toward the upkeep of the building, ostensibly as a civic gesture, but perhaps also with an eye to keeping worship, like education, segregated.



Rev. George Claudius Taylor, D.D., Pastor from 1899 – 1900

Around 1920, the tourism industry that had thrived since the advent of the B&O Railroad began to erode. The Great Depression bookended by two world wars meant that fewer people had the means to travel for pleasure. After World War II, the increase in road construction and automobile ownership enabled vacationers to drive to destinations beyond rail lines.

Fewer and fewer people came to the mountains by train to stay in the grand hotels of Deer Park, Mountain Lake Park, and Oakland. The wooden buildings burned down—or were torn down for their lumber. Many jobs that had been related to these summer visitors vanished. Deep Creek Lake, started in 1925, did not yet provide plentiful employment as the earlier resorts had done.

Consequently, the African American population in the County declined rapidly starting in the late 1920s, and Bethel A.M.E. lost its membership. The congregation closed, and the church building was sold in 1934 to Amish blacksmith Simon Swartzentruber, who





Above: A prayer service (left) was held in the former church building before it was moved from the farm. Samuel Yoder (right) made a final wheel before the shop was dismantled. *BOTH PHOTOS BY MARK STUTZMAN*



Left: On June 25, 2022, a ground-breaking ceremony was held at the new Bethel Center location in Mountain Lake Park. Participants included (l to r): Yvonne West Burroughs, Bethel A.M.E. descendant; Daphne Gooding, Garrett County NAACP President; Willie Flowers, Maryland NAACP President; Tifani Fisher, Allegany County NAACP President; Ravonah Stringfellow, Mountain Lake Park resident; and Scarlett West-Spicer, Bethel A.M.E. descendant. *PHOTO BY ALBERT L. FELDSTEIN*

dismantled it from its lot in Oakland, and reassembled it on his farm as a workshop. There it remained in use by the family until Swartzentruber's grandson Samuel Yoder made a final wheel there in May 2022.

Like the former church structure, the turn of the century African American community of Garrett County was largely forgotten for nearly a century.

In recent decades, there has been an increase in the number of African Americans who visit the area and who call Garrett County home. A few years ago, Kate Smith, a black resident of Oakland and former Oakland Town Council member, became aware of the historic building and began to interest other people in reviving earlier efforts to save it.

Samuel Yoder, whose grandfather was adamant the former church should never leave the County, was willing to have the structure moved from his land to a place where it could represent an important part of the area's past. The original Oakland location of the church had long since been used

for a private residence, but through the creative thinking of Don Sincell, mayor of Mountain Lake Park; the efforts of the Mountain Lake Park town council; and the generosity of the congregation of the Apostolics of Oakland Church, a new lot was found.

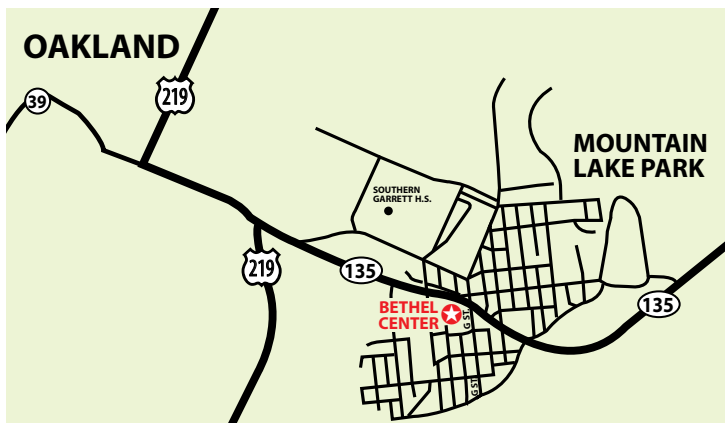
The Apostolics of Oakland Church is situated on 5.5 acres of the original Mountain Lake Park Assembly Hall property. The section chosen for the Bethel structure is convenient and visible, at the corner of G Street and Maryland Highway (Route 135). An essential group of people worked to find grant money (including from Maryland Historical Trust African American Heritage Preservation Program, Community Legacy, Preservation Maryland, and The Maryland State Society Daughters of the American Revolution) and other funding to purchase the new site offered by the Apostolics, to prepare a foundation, to buy the structure, to move it, and to reconstruct it. Many commercial and private members of the community have donated time and materials.



The Mountain Lake Park Historical Association (current officers are Karen Wooddell, Gerry Duket, and Linda Fike; Mark Stutzman serves as a volunteer consultant) was formed to support the restored church building and other historic initiatives in the town. Their very informative website, mlpha.org, has provided ongoing reports on the Bethel Center project.

In spring of 2022, members of the community and guests from Cumberland and other areas, including some descendants of original Bethel A.M.E. congregation members, held a worship service at the farm to recognize the religious significance of the old building. Then it was disassembled again, this time by Jason Martin. It was stored on the Martin farm until it could be brought to the new site and hoisted into place.

Preservation specialists were consulted. As weather allowed, a new roof was installed, the sliding barn door was removed to allow for a salvaged traditional door, and new siding was nailed over the exterior. Restoration continues with windows—old glass has been found to replace original panes that are missing—and interior finishing of the building. There will be electricity, but no water. Jason Martin has made every effort to retain any of the original fabric of the building that can be saved, and to rebuild as authentically as possible. It has been a challenge; some parts of the structure have held up better than others over more than a century of use, and building techniques of that era were not as standardized as



Top left: Jason Martin and helper, Nathan Martin, work to reassemble the building on its new site. *PHOTO BY MARY REISINGER*

Top right: A crane places parts of the wooden structure onto the foundation prepared for it in Mountain Lake Park.

PHOTO BY LAURA STUTZMAN

Middle: By February 2024, the building crew had installed a new roof, framed a new doorway, and started covering the building with new siding. *PHOTO BY MARY REISINGER*

Above: Bethel Center is located at the corner of G Street and Maryland Highway (Rt. 135), a short drive from Oakland, MD.

they are now. Jason says that he learned to be prepared for the unexpected.

The ground-breaking ceremony in the Mountain Lake Park location was held on June 25, 2022. Nearly two years later, significant progress has been made. A re-dedication of the former Bethel A.M.E. church building as Bethel Center will be held on September 23, 2024, exactly 124 years from the date of its original dedication. The governor and other officials have been invited. It promises to be a significant day of celebration.

Plans for Bethel Center focus on using it to retrieve and honor the history of a group of people whose important contribution to the area has for the past century received little attention. Those working on the project hope it will be visited by people who want to learn about the early African American residents of Garrett County. Students will be encouraged to make field trips to the building. Bethel Center could serve as a meaningful venue for small weddings and other special religious services. There will be programming around special events such as the Victorian Chautauqua weekend each summer. Look for many opportunities to gain insights into African American culture in Mountain Maryland.

The Mountain Lake Park Historical Association wants to document as much as possible about the members of Bethel A.M.E. Journals, letters, oral history accounts, photographs, and other artifacts related to the congregation would all be most welcome.

Readers with information related to other aspects of African American life in Garrett County could contact the Garrett County Historical Society. Check for contact information at its website: <https://garrettcountymuseums.com/historicalsociety>.



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Miners Park — Coal Miner Memorial

HONORING WESTERN MARYLAND'S COAL MINING HERITAGE,
FROSTBURG, MARYLAND

Written by: **Dan Whetzel**

The coal mining story of Western Maryland is one of determination, sacrifice, and hard work that began more than two centuries ago. From explorers and early settlers along George's Creek who happened upon outcroppings for personal use to current commercial enterprises, coal mining has been associated with the region. Those who labored in the coal fields laid an economic foundation for Allegany County as railroads, highways, and the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal created transportation opportunities and advantages that benefitted everyone. Increasing business activity also attracted merchants who were vital in establishing communities along George's Creek and nearby areas. Local coal mining history will soon be captured within the Coal Miner Memorial located at Frostburg, Maryland. Memorial Park will serve as a major travel destination and memorial for families whose ancestors sacrificed and perished in the underground coal mines of Allegany County.

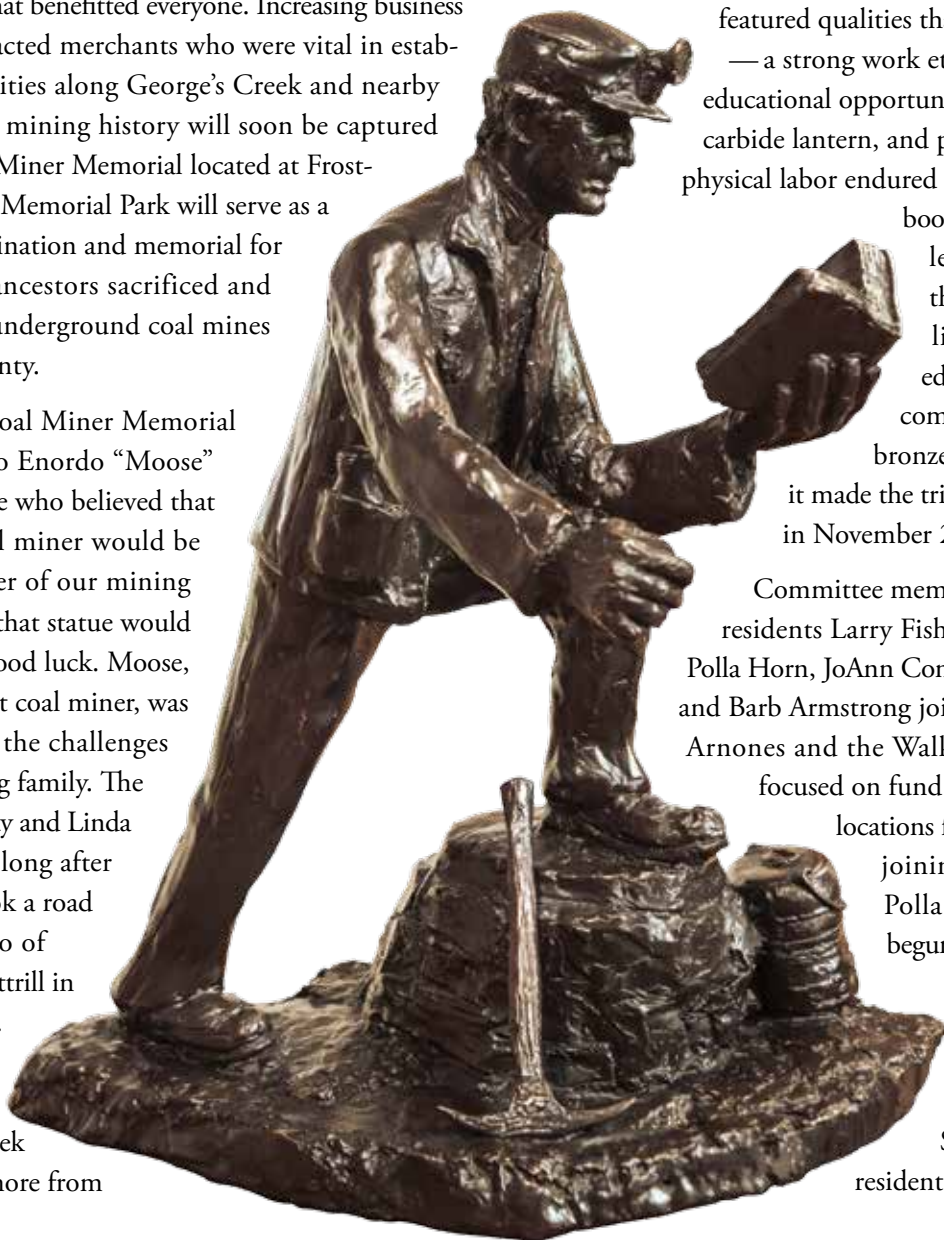
Credit for the Coal Miner Memorial Statue belongs to Enordo "Moose" and Ellen Arnone who believed that a statue of a coal miner would be a fitting reminder of our mining legacy. Rubbing that statue would certainly bring good luck. Moose, son of an Eckhart coal miner, was raised alongside the challenges faced by a mining family. The duo contacted Ray and Linda Walker, and not long after the foursome took a road trip to the studio of sculptor Alan Cottrill in Zanesville, Ohio.

It was stressed to Mr. Cottrill that George's Creek miners wanted more from

life than laborer's wages. Many were literate and placed a high value on formal education. Their dedication to progress became apparent when funds were needed to purchase land for Normal School #2 in Frostburg. Coal miners and civic minded organizations responded in a positive way and the land for what began as a school for teachers is today's Frostburg State University.

Mr. Cottrill was subsequently commissioned to create a maquette, a small replica of the actual statue. The maquette featured qualities that miners possessed — a strong work ethic and a desire for educational opportunities. The lunch pail, carbide lantern, and pick symbolized the physical labor endured by a miner, while a book held in the miner's left hand captured the desire for a better life through formal education. Mr. Cottrill completed the life-sized bronze statue in 2018 and it made the trip home to Frostburg in November 2023.

Committee membership expanded as residents Larry Fisher, Charlie Walker, Polla Horn, JoAnn Condry, Bucky Schriver, and Barb Armstrong joined forces with the Arnonos and the Walkers. Discussions focused on fund raising and possible locations for the statue. Before joining the committee, Polla Horn had already begun the task of researching and recording the accidental deaths of local miners. Bucky Schriver, Midland resident and local historian,





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Alexander Smith • Margaret Ryan
 Elizabeth Smith Carr • John S. Carr

Birth Name: Alexander Smith
 Birth Date: 1838
 Birth Place: ...
 Death Date: ...
 Death Place: ...

You Leland Scott left behind for George's County, a brand new life. A slip of case his name Smith, death took him from his wife. To stay the course and take his better, proud Margaret possessed. Daughter Laine was John Carr and no longer name approved. These letters, O.K. with authors hands, each typed from George Carr. An iron dream, due to heart, they had from love and life. The only and like with Scotland never gone among its hills and soil. An Canada Trade was grateful for our Smith's ever and well.

joined her and together they compiled the stories of more than 700 deceased miners from 1838-2007. Their findings proved to be significant and ongoing; six years were required to verify names, dates of deaths, location of mines, and descriptions of specific causes of deaths. Their research is ongoing; they recently discovered the demise of two more miners. Results of Polla and Bucky's work were edited by Barb Armstrong into weekly biographies printed in the *Cumberland Times-News* and later compiled into a series of three books. As of 2024, 714 deaths have been recorded and at least 40 of that number were 16 years of age or younger.

The Foundation for Frostburg, a 501c3 formed in 1995 to serve the community, accepted the project in 2012. Since that time, all donations and fund raising proceeds have been placed in the Coal Miner Memorial Statue Fund.

As the statue neared completion, discussions shifted to finding an appropriate setting. The scope of the project had grown. What began as a statue had morphed into an educational

Opposite page: The life-sized bronze statue of a coal miner is the focal point of the Memorial. It features qualities that the miners possessed — a strong work ethic and a desire for educational opportunities. PHOTO BY LANCE BELL

Above: The Memorial in progress, ready for installation of the graphic panels. PHOTO BY BUCKY SCHRIVER

Left: One of the 14 panels with names in alphabetical order of accidental deaths of local miners.



Left: Visitors can experience the feel of entering a coal mine, simulated by overhead timbers and narrow walls.

PHOTO BY BUCKY SCHRIVER

Below: Committee members and volunteers Bryon Arnone and Brynn Arnone (left) and Brett Arnone and Barb Armstrong (right) work on attaching the 18 graphic panels to the final display boards in preparation for installation at the Memorial.



memorial. After several site visits, interest narrowed to a location in Frostburg between the former Cumberland & Pennsylvania Railroad Depot and the Great Allegheny Passage. The site was owned by Allegany County and offered the advantage of sufficient space to augment the statue.

Proposals for the park's design and construction required collaboration among the miner's committee, A.C. Armstrong Design Group LLC., Bennett, Brewer & Associates, the City of Frostburg, Kathie Smith of Advertising Art Design, Inc. and Allegany County officials. Corey Armstrong, associate at A.C. Armstrong Design Group of Frostburg, recalled the initial contacts and early planning. "The committee visited us and showed old photographs of local underground mines. We also made a site visit and discussed ideas for designing the park. We agreed the park should honor the memory of those who labored and accidentally died in the mines—we wanted to tell their story in a personal way."

All agreed the setting should include the experience of entering a coal mine, so simulated overhead timbers and walls were integrated into the design. "We wanted visitors to feel the experience of a deep mine," recalled Corey.

As visitors follow the pathways, they will also encounter interpretive signage that leads to the statue. Fourteen large panels will identify the names of those miners who typically immigrated to the United States seeking a better life, only to suffer a tragic ending. The meticulous research that went into compiling the information will provide guests with a self-contained history lesson. Major topics include The Early Days,

Railroads and Canals, The Rise and Fall of the Coal Empire, Meet Our Miners, The Importance of an Education, Contemporary Coal Mining, Children in the Mines, and a Map of Coal Mines and Railroads. The memorial will likely motivate and inspire guests to further research family and local history.

Barb Armstrong, Frostburg resident and long-time committee member, reflected on the memorial park's development over a decade in time. "The project began in 2012, and there's a reason it took such a long time to reach fruition. It's one-of-a-kind, dedicated to the natural resource of coal and those who mined it for a living. Coal brought both prosperity and despair to Western Maryland. Coal brought talented immigrants

from Europe and beyond who packed up their culture, and brought it with them, and learned to combine their old lives with the new ones. As we uncovered their stories and took in the history we knew it was really important—no matter how long it would take to do it right.”

And to do it right the project required significant additional funding. A State of Maryland Bond Fund, the Rocky Gap Foundation, Allegany County Commissioners, Project Open Space, City of Frostburg, and the individuals who contributed to the Foundation for Frostburg were instrumental in funding a project that now hovers above the \$550,000 mark. In addition, Allegany County Department of Public Works handled the bid/award procedure and oversaw the construction.

A dozen years in the making, the Coal Miner Memorial will soon offer a unique learning experience for residents, riders of the trail and train, and other guests who want to take a peek through a window to the past. While much of the work has been completed, installation of signage and other tasks are still pending prior to the dedication. It is anticipated that descendants of deceased county coal miners will attend the memorial's opening ceremonies.

Reflecting on the park's progress over the years Bucky Schriver, committee member, is complimentary. “We researched other coal miner memorials around the country, and we believe ours is the best one.”

The memorial park dedication ceremony is tentatively planned for early August 2024.

For more information on Western Maryland Coal Mining see www.mountaindiscoveries.com Past and Present Issues: Fall/Winter 2018 and Fall/Winter 2019.



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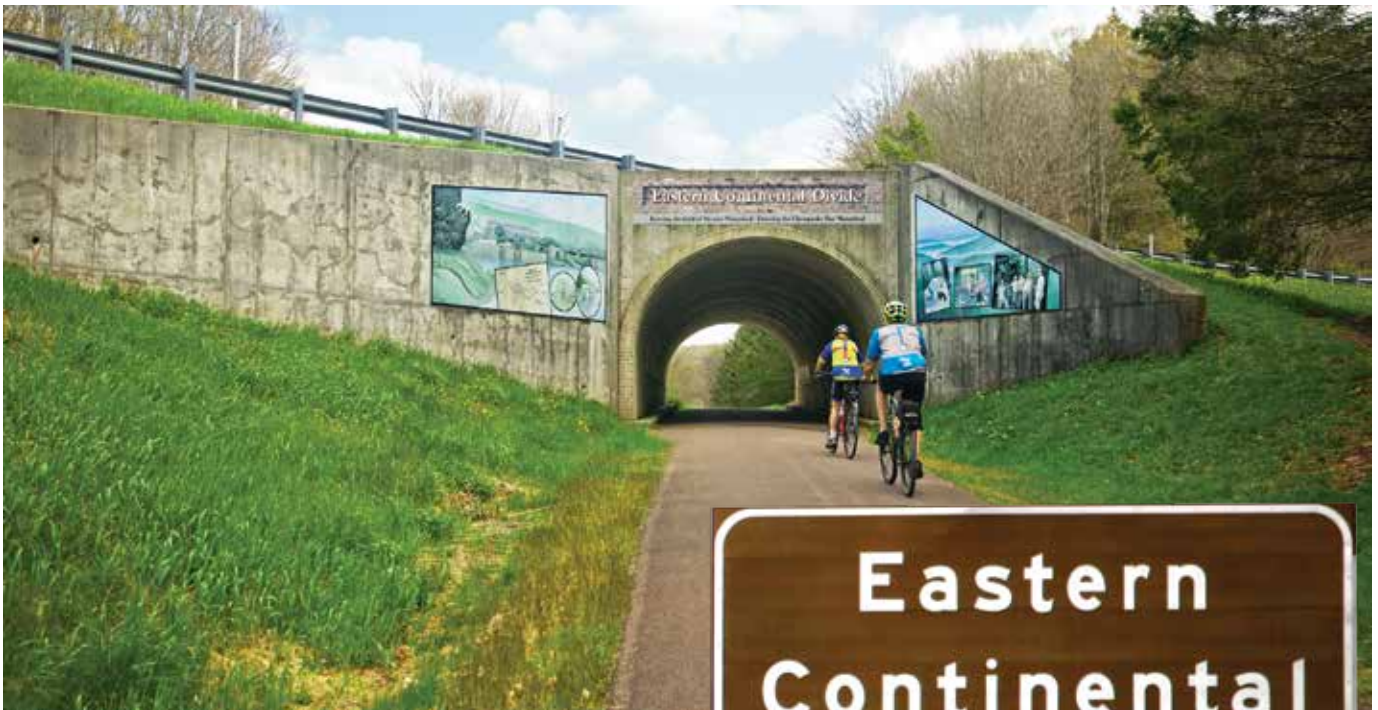


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Eastern Continental Divide

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE, HISTORY AND FUN

Written by: **Shelby Calhoun**



Driving along I-68 through Garrett County, Maryland, at approximately mile marker 26, is an overpass for Green Lantern Road. Situated before the bridge overpass are signs indicating the Eastern Continental Divide, Elevation 2610 FT. I've passed this sign many times, but not given it much thought. Vaguely remembering a reference to the Great Continental Divide in a history or geography class had given me enough information to recall that precipitation falling to the east of the Great Divide emptied into the Atlantic Ocean and precipitation falling on the west side emptied into the Pacific Ocean – but that was the extent of my knowledge on the subject. Whether due to inattention on my part, or an oversight in the curriculum, I don't remember hearing anything about an Eastern Continental Divide.

So what is the significance of the Eastern Continental Divide sign?

Environmental Science –

The Eastern Continental Divide (ECD) originates in Pennsylvania on the summit named 'Triple Divide Peak' approximately 10 miles south of the New York-Pennsylvania border. The ECD follows the boundary between the Allegheny River and Susquehanna River watersheds through most of Pennsylvania. At Blue Knob near Altoona, the divide begins to follow Allegheny Mountain and then Little Savage Mountain. A few miles before the Pennsylvania/Maryland state border, the divide begins to separate the Youghiogheny River and Potomac River watersheds.



Above: The Eastern Continental Divide is the highest point on the Great Allegheny Passage.

Sign on I-68 in Garrett County, Maryland, indicating the elevation of the Eastern Continental Divide.

PHOTOS BY MIKE CALHOUN

In Maryland, the Divide runs significantly west of the Allegheny Front, following Backbone Mountain, and passing near the source of the North Branch Potomac River at the Fairfax Stone. The ECD then passes through a plateau of the Allegheny Mountains of West Virginia, passing between the north end of the Canaan Valley in the Cheat River watershed, and the Mount Storm Lake basin in the Potomac River watershed. The divide then rejoins the Allegheny Front.

As it continues south, the Eastern Continental Divide passes through several East Coast states until it enters Florida. Precipitation to the west of the divide eventually empties into the Gulf of Mexico watershed, while precipitation to the east ends up in the Atlantic Seaboard watershed. Although a divide is often associated with high elevation the ECD at its southern terminus, which is the northern



Kissimmee River watershed in Florida, is only 70 feet above sea level.

History –

As it turns out, the Eastern Continental Divide played an important part in the history of America. Prior to the mid-1700s the ECD, also known as the Eastern Divide or Appalachian Divide, represented a boundary between British and French possessions in North America. The French and Indian War which began in 1754 and ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1763 provided Great Britain enormous territorial gains in North America. The Proclamation Line of 1763 was a British-produced boundary marked in the Appalachian Mountains at the Eastern Continental Divide. The decree prohibited American colonists from settling on lands acquired from the French, following the French and Indian War, which were located west of the ECD. This decree limited expansion, caused disputes over subsequent frontier policy and forced the colonists to pay extra taxes in order to cover expenses from the war. The colonist's discontent concerning these limitations ultimately helped lead to the American Revolution.

Fun –

The Great Allegheny Passage is a 150-mile rail trail between Cumberland, MD, and Pittsburgh, PA. The Eastern Continental Divide (ECD) is the highest point on the Great



Above: One of several informational signs inside the underpass on the GAP trail.

Left: The Eastern Continental Divide on the Great Allegheny Passage is a favorite stopping point for photographs for hikers and bikers.

Allegheny Passage (GAP) at 2,392 feet above sea

level, located at mile marker 23.7. Since the trail opened, the watershed divide on the GAP has been amusing both hikers and bikers. As the GAP crosses from one watershed to the next, it is marked by murals depicting the Western Maryland Railway and Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad on either side of an underpass below McKenzie Hollow Road between Meyersdale and Frostburg. A favorite stopping point for photographs, it is often surrounded by wildflowers in the summer months and beautiful fall foliage each October. Along the GAP trail, the ECD is most closely accessible via the Deal, PA, trail-head.

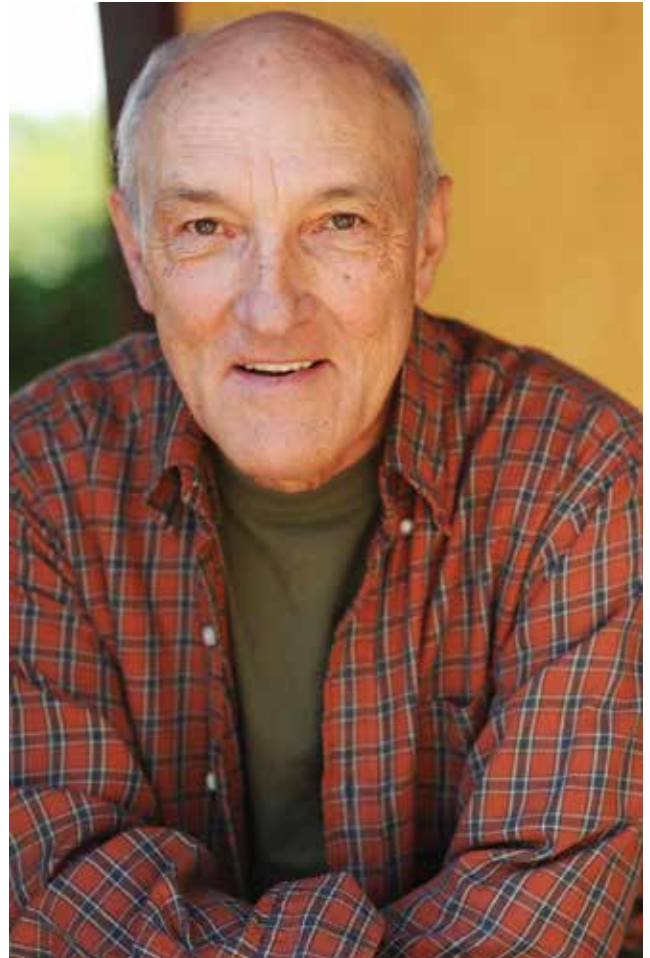
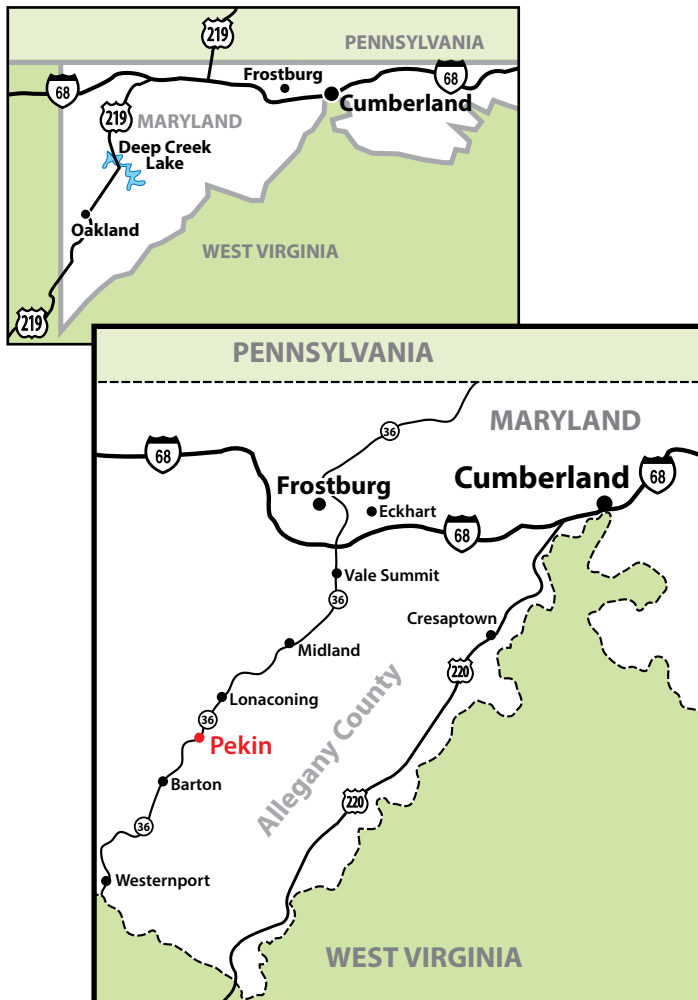
So, if like me, you missed the information on the Eastern Continental Divide in school, you may want to take a little side trip and see how much information one little sign along a highway can actually mean.

For more information see: <https://gaptrail.org>
<https://www.hmdb.org> <https://www.scrt.org>

From a Coal Town to **HOLLYWOOD**

A Professional Actor's Remarkable Journey

Written by: **Bucky Schriver**



JOHN GOWANS

The Appalachian Mountain Range in the eastern United States has long been associated with the production and mining of bituminous coal, and with severe poverty. Western Allegany County in Maryland is transected by the Appalachian Mountains and shares in that legacy.

The George's Creek Valley of Allegany County is a 15-mile corridor extending from the city of Frostburg on the north to the town of Westernport on the south. The region derives its name from the stream that has its head spring near

Frostburg and empties into the Potomac River at Westernport on the West Virginia border. The valley is cradled by Dan's Mountain on the east and Savage Mountain to the west, each of which is just shy of 3,000 feet in elevation.

More than 700 men and boys died in the underground coal mines of Allegany County, Maryland. Directly in the middle of the George's Creek Valley is the small coal town of Pekin (now known as Nikep). The small town of Pekin was particularly hard hit. Considered per capita, there

were more miners from Pekin who were killed in work related accidents than any other town in Allegany County. Ten men and boys from Pekin lost their lives in the underground coal mines. Today, the town is home to just 150 residents.

Without benefit of the plethora of government assistance programs that exist today, life in the Appalachian coal fields of far Western Maryland in the late 1800s and early 1900s was a precarious affair. Desperate poverty would often make it necessary for children in coal mining families in far Western Maryland to sacrifice their education at an early age to work to help support the family. Young boys, aged 10 or younger, would commonly go to work in the underground coal mines with their fathers. Teenage girls were often hired out as domestic servants. Although the families were surely grateful for the extra money that the children earned, the lack of education condemned these children to a life of low-paying menial labor, and the cycle of poverty would be perpetuated for another generation. Anything beyond an elementary education was out of reach for many children in coal mining families.

The Industrial Revolution in the 1800s and the establishment of Frostburg Normal School No.2 in 1902 (which is now Frostburg State University) were seminal developments that would augur the end of the coal miner's cycle of poverty. Better paying factory jobs would offer wages sufficient for the father to support the family without the need for child labor. This allowed the children to finish high school, with an opportunity for an even higher education. A child labor



World War I veteran John Thomas "Jack" Miller, John Gowans' grandfather, was killed in the Kingsland Coal mine in 1926.

act, passed by the Maryland Legislature in 1912, prohibited boys younger than 16 from working in the underground coal mines. Parents who had been victims of child labor had more than ample reason to value the educational opportunities offered to their children and to make sure these children were diligent with their school studies.

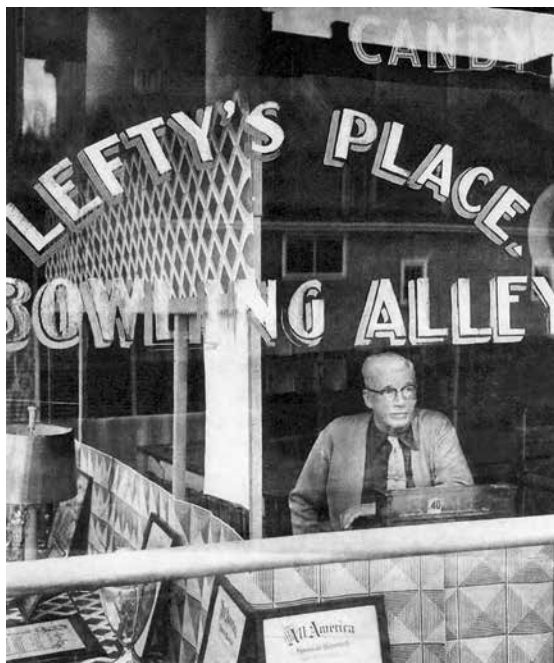
Funds were solicited in 1898 to purchase the Beall's Park property in Frostburg, Maryland, as the site for Frostburg Normal School No. 2, a training ground for teachers. The overwhelming majority of donors who contributed to the fund to purchase the Beall's Park property were impoverished coal miners. Although they were surely sacrificing money that was needed for the daily needs of their families, the miners realized that it would pave the way for future generations to have a better life. Many accomplished people with local roots can trace their success back to the establishment of the college in Frostburg.

World War I veteran John Thomas "Jack" Miller, a resident of Pekin, was killed in the Kingsland Mine in Lonaconing, Maryland, on June 1, 1926. He left his widow, Bertha (Rowe) Miller, and two infant children, two-year-old Virginia and two-month-old Francis. Virginia Miller's son, John Gowans, remembers his grandmother Bertha admonishing him to focus on his school studies. According to John's own words, "She wanted me to work in an office and not in a factory or a coal mine." (*Besides his grandfather, John Gowans also lost a great grand uncle and a maternal*

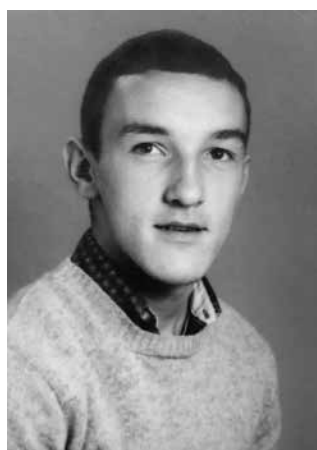


great grandfather to accidents in the underground coal mines of Allegany County, Maryland.)

John's elementary education began at the Pekin School, a rudimentary two-room schoolhouse built in 1870, featuring a tar paper roof and a rock rubble foundation. The school property included an outhouse, since there was no indoor plumbing. A water pail and dipper were placed in the school room to provide the children with drinking water. After spending four years at the Pekin School, John's elementary education was completed at Central School in nearby Lonaconing.



Baseball was a big part of life in the George's Creek coal towns. Games in Pekin were played in a small, grassy field simply known as "The Green," often with a worn-out ball that had been repaired with tape. In the 1950s, the Western Maryland Railway tracks in Pekin passed by the Pekin Mine coal tipple on the north end of town. One half mile north of the tipple, the railway intersected with Union Street in Lonaconing. A left turn on the sidewalk at Union Street would lead to the front door of Lefty's Place, a combination pool hall and bowling alley, which had the ambiance of an impromptu baseball museum. The proprietor, Robert "Lefty" Grove, was a retired professional



baseball player and an inductee of the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Lefty Grove, a native of Lonaconing, was the son of a coal miner and was forced to leave school at age 12, in order to go to work to help support his parents and siblings. A teen-aged John Gowans frequently stepped the railroad ties to Union Street to earn money as a pin setter at Lefty's Place and spent many enjoyable hours

Top to Bottom: Pekin School in Western Maryland; John as a member of the Safety Patrol at Central Elementary School in Lonaconing, MD; while working as a pin setter, teenaged John enjoyed many hours listening to baseball stories at Lefty's Place Pool Hall/Bowling Alley; John was born and raised in this humble home in Pekin; one of John's class photos from Valley High School, Lonaconing, MD.

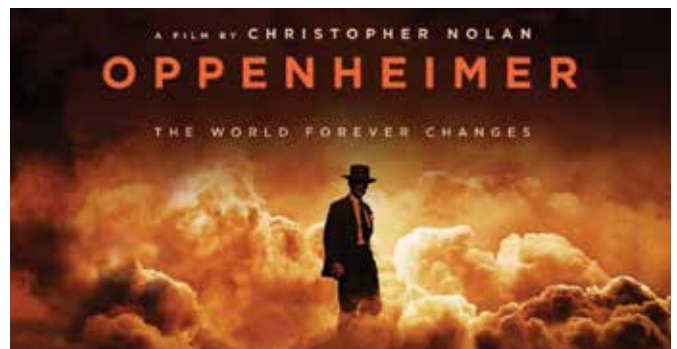
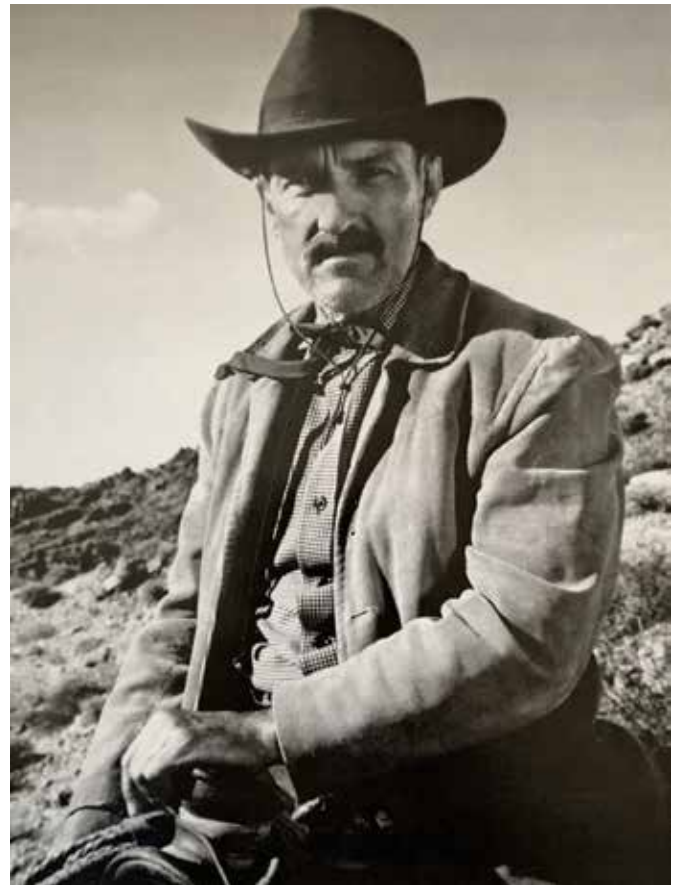
listening to Lefty's baseball stories as well as studying the trophies, photos, and baseball memorabilia that decorated the walls. Perhaps seeing the celebrity status that Lefty achieved after being raised in such challenging conditions was an inspiration to John.

After graduating from Valley High School in Lonaconing in 1961, John enrolled at Frostburg State College, where he majored in elementary education, with a minor in theater. John's drama instructor at Frostburg State College, Dorothy Stone White, had previously taught sophomore English and drama at Morgantown High School and directed the Community Theater in Morgantown, West Virginia. According to John, she always wore it as a badge of honor that one of her former students was the famous actor, Morgantown native Don Knotts.

Although John was trained as a teacher, his first love was the theater. After graduating from college in 1968, the aspiring actor made his way to Florida, where he quickly found work with the Asolo Repertory Theater in Sarasota. After spending three years in Florida, he moved to New York City to parlay his acting skills in an environment that offered more opportunity for advancement. During his tenure in New York, John played a role in the stage production of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* for 2½ years. In 1974, the decision was made to relocate to Hollywood, California. Coincidentally, Harvey Medlinsky, the stage director John had worked with in New York City moved to Hollywood soon afterward; the two joined forces again on a stage production of this same play in California. The award-winning movie starring Jack Nicholson, based on the same script, debuted in 1975.

In 1990, John landed a leading role in the movie *Storm and Sorrow*, which was based on a true story. The movie depicted the saga of mountain climbing groups from 12 different countries that survived an avalanche in the Pamir Mountains in Tajikistan in 1974. The movie was filmed in the mountains of Austria and Budapest, Hungary. John played the role of Robert Craig, leader of the American climbing team. An avid mountain climber himself, the actor now looks back on his character in that movie as his favorite role. After filming, he had the privilege of touring the countries of Italy, France, and Switzerland.

Besides playing roles in more than 70 television series including *Hill Street Blues*, *Night Court*, *The Young and Restless*, *The Rockford Files*, *Dallas*, and *Dynasty*, the Pekin native landed roles in the movies *You Light Up My Life* (1977), *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979), and *Battle Beyond The Stars* (1980). More recently, John has appeared in the hit television series *Yellowstone* and played the role of



Top: John in the 1991 Loyola Marymount College student film *The Badland*. The movie was shot in the Mojave Desert near Baker, California.

Middle and Above: John portrayed Ward Evans in the recent Academy Award winner, *Oppenheimer*.



Ward Evans in the highly renowned movie *Oppenheimer*. *Oppenheimer* received seven Academy Awards (March 2024) including Best Picture, Best Actor and Best Director.

John Gowans' acting career has led him to many exotic places and depicts a remarkably sharp upward trajectory from his first acting experience in the Pekin School Christmas program in 1951, when he was eight years old. Sentimental ties to his upbringing in the small coal town of Pekin remain unbroken. He still has the hand-cranked Victrola from the Pekin School at his home in Hollywood, California.



Above left: John was recently presented with the Screen Actors Guild award honoring him for his outstanding performance by a cast member in *Oppenheimer*.

Above right: John still has the hand-cranked Victrola from the Pekin School.

Left: John visited the newly constructed Miner's display in Frostburg, MD. Over 700 miners who lost their lives in the coal mines of Allegany County, MD, are depicted on the display along with John's grandfather, John Thomas "Jack" Miller.






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Lavender Lemonade

Recipe provide by Anne Davidson, Deep Creek Lavender Farm

2 cups water
 1¼ cups sugar
 2 Tbsp to ¼ cup lavender buds
(depending on preferences)
 1½ cups lemon juice (bottled)
 Additional 3 cups water
 Ice

Boil 2 cups water and add sugar to make a simple syrup. Remove from heat and add lavender buds.

Stir and steep buds for an hour (or overnight). Pour the lavender-infused simple syrup through a sieve to remove lavender buds. To this simple syrup add 1½ cups lemon juice. Then add 3 cups of water, or 2 cups of water and about 2 cups of ice cubes.

If you prefer sweeter lemonade, add ¼ cup more sugar to the simple syrup.

This is delicious served with vodka or coconut rum for a summer cocktail (for those of legal age, of course)!

All Things Lavender

Can be Found at Deep Creek Lavender Farm

In December 2012, Anne and Scott Davidson opened Deep Creek Lavender Farm in Accident, Maryland, and are currently open for their 11th summer lavender season. The farm has nearly 1500 lavender plants, with 15 different varieties of English lavender, in shades of purple, white, and pink.

At the farm store, visitors will find a wide selection of lavender-based, hand-crafted products to sooth and nurture the body and spirit: soaps, lotions, massage and bath oils, eye masks, neck wraps, sachets, quilts, candles and more. Culinary treats include brownies, shortbread, and scone mixes, as well as lavender coffee, jams and jellies. Culinary lavender grown on the farm is available for purchase to use in recipes at home. Gardeners can purchase plants and a copy of the Lavender Lover's Handbook for advice and tips on the many uses of lavender.

The farm's "Pick Your Own" program allows visitors to borrow a pair of scissors to cut as much lavender as they want. A spaghetti measure is used to determine the price. Other programs available throughout the summer include seminars on growing lavender, wreath making craft (go home with a completed lavender wreath), sip and paint, yoga, and educational programs. See the website for a list of events.

Deep Creek Lavender Farm, located at 625 Doerr Road, Accident, MD 21520, was voted the **"Top Tourist Attraction"** and **"Favorite Outdoor Space"** in *The Republican* in 2023. New things are being added all of the time! Come and stay for a while. Sit on the rockers and enjoy the wonderful views.

Deep Creek Lavender Farm is open from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Hours are 10 am – 5 pm on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays. In peak lavender season, from June 28 through July 15, the farm is open daily. Some fall hours are also available – call for hours at **240-608-8282** or visit online **www.deepcreeklavenderfarm.com** and on Facebook.



The lavender in peak bloom at the farm; a wide variety of lavender-based items available at the farm store; and an outdoor summer yoga class. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY DEEP CREEK LAVENDER FARM

Play Ball, Hagerstown!

THE FLYING BOXCARS JOIN THE ATLANTIC LEAGUE OF PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL — HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND

Written by: **Sara Mullins**

Attention, Hagerstown area baseball fans! The wait is over! Clear your calendars for Friday, May 17, 2024, when professional baseball returns to the Hub City. The Flying Boxcars will make its debut in the brand new Meritus Park, billed by promoters as “America’s Newest and Most Innovative Ballpark.” Join the fun and don’t forget the peanuts and Cracker Jack!

The creation of the new team was announced on September 1, 2021, with plans to start playing ball in 2023 but was deferred to 2024 to allow completion of the new stadium. The new team joins 10 other teams active in the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball, and will operate as an independent, minor league roster of former professional players with big league experience.

“Baseball is back to fill a 5-year void,” says David Blenckstone, general manager and the team’s first employee. Before then, baseball’s Hagerstown Suns thrived in Hagerstown for 39 years. “The entire community is excited. This is their home. It’s an amazing location in an urban setting, and has a unique feel. It’s the nicest minor league location.”

Blenckstone became the first employee of the Flying Boxcars in April 2023 when named the team’s general manager. Previously he was the athletic director at St. Maria Goretti Catholic High School. In 1996 he became the general manager of the Hagerstown Suns, a team his father owned from 1986 to 2001. In 2024, the Boxcars announced a partnership with Meritus Health that allowed the company to become the team’s sports medicine provider and included a provision allowing Meritus to acquire the naming rights for the stadium—hence the name Meritus Park.

In November 2023, the team’s management invited fans to participate in a Downtown Baseball team-naming contest that garnered more than 1,700 entries. Other imaginative finalists include the Battle Swans, Diezel Dogs, Haymakers and Tin Lizards.



The Flying Boxcars name prevailed, paying tribute to Hagerstown’s aviation history as the home of Fairchild Aircraft. At one time the largest employer in Washington County, with 10,000 workers, Fairchild produced C-82 and C-119 cargo planes at the Hagerstown Municipal Airport during the 1940s and ’50s.

The relocation of the C-119’s cockpit from the top of the fuselage to the front of the plane allowed for more space in the cargo hold. The aircraft’s resemblance to a railroad boxcar inspired the unofficial nickname of the Flying Boxcar. In September 2023, The Flying Boxcars unveiled team logos featuring a pilot sporting an aviator hat and baseball uniform astride a C-119.

This past February, the mascot was unveiled as a fictitious character named Stryker with the following fictitious story: His parents were technicians at Fairchild Aircraft, where the Boxcars namesake C-119 aircraft were manufactured. Stryker also served as a test pilot before leaving to join the Air Force. In the late 1960s, he took off on a mission and returned more than a half-century later to Hagerstown Regional Airport with a new mission: to tell the story of Fairchild Aircraft — and to bring baseball back to Hagerstown.

On March 24, 2022, the Hagerstown City Council voted unanimously to demolish the city’s aging Municipal Stadium that hosted ballgames since its first home game on May 8, 1930. For more than 90 years, the stadium was at the heart of the local baseball scene and home to the former Hagerstown Suns. Baseball superstars who launched their careers include Willie Mays, who played his first game at the park as a minor league rookie. In 1990, then President George H. W. Bush came to Hagerstown to enjoy the Hagerstown Suns game at Municipal Stadium.

Given the Hagerstown area’s long-standing devotion to baseball, community leaders agreed that a new ballpark was needed, and along with a state elected official made



Stadium construction aerial view mid-March 2024.

PHOTO BY SCOTT CANTNER

this happen. Like Ray Kinsella (played by Kevin Costner) in the iconic 1989 film “Field of Dreams,” they believed the film’s premise that “If you build it, they will come.”

Dan Spedden, president of Visit Hagerstown, has been one of the most prominent proponents of a new ballpark in Hagerstown. Since 1999, Dan has been a strong advocate for the new ballpark project that finally garnered sufficient support to move ahead in 2020. He says the delay has been worth the wait, resulting in a better location plus more and better amenities. “The ballpark is not just about baseball,” he says. “This is a once-in-a-generation project.”

Dan is a strong proponent of the community leaders’ decision to locate the ballpark in a persistently poverty stricken part of town, viewing the ballpark as an anchor to spark a revitalization of the city’s core that will attract more customers. In essence, the ballpark can serve as an urban renewal strategy.

“Hagerstown has become a ‘donut city’ defined by out-migration,” he says, “with the city center losing residents and businesses to the suburbs. “Hagerstown is not unique. This phenomenon has been a growing problem for cities, post-pandemic.” He cites an article in *Fortune Magazine* by Mark Davidson, professor of geography at Clarkson University, in which Davidson writes, “The widespread

adoption of remote and hybrid work schedules has drained commercial offices and caused tenants to terminate leases.” The result is urban flight to the suburbs.

The possibility of locating the ballpark near the intersections of I-81 and I-70 was considered, but community leaders concluded that this location wouldn’t adequately address core issues downtown, in the center of the “donut.” Locating the Flying Boxcars ballpark downtown as an anchor project in a negative hole would, in their view, better achieve the goal of transforming downtown Hagerstown into an attractive place to live and work, thereby attracting the people who can spark a renaissance to revive downtown Hagerstown.

“People are still questioning the project. It’s hard to get the message across to naysayers,” he adds. Dan points to Fort Wayne, Indiana’s, successful downtown revitalization efforts to address the blight of urban decay that often arises from the ‘donut hole’ phenomenon.

“Businesses will follow and bring hundreds of people,” Dan says. “We’ll see more demand for restaurants and other businesses that will create more jobs and revitalize the city. These will be career positions. We’ll create a walkable community where people can work in their neighborhoods.”



**Construction progress at press-time (May 1, 2024).
Opening day is scheduled for May 17, 2024.**

PHOTO COURTESY VISIT HAGERSTOWN

The new Meritus Park's final design reflects Hagerstown's history as a thriving railroad transportation hub during the 19th and 20th centuries, giving Hagerstown the often used nickname "Hub City."

Jonathan Cole, the new ballpark's architect, has been involved in the design of 29 minor league ballparks. "We know the city has a long history in brick masonry. That's one of the important pieces of the design," Jonathan says. Capturing Hagerstown's essence and history is the goal. "You don't just take a ballpark from somewhere else and drop it off," he says. "We want to respond to the context of the cities that they're in. There are opportunities to take advantage of the pedestrian experience. It's an urban ballpark. The downtown location influenced the design."

Meritus Park also serves as a multipurpose venue with a capacity of 5,000 for ballgames and 9,000 for concerts. It can be converted to a rectangular field for football and lacrosse and can also be used as a conference center. Planners created space for mingling and relaxing, with easy access to a beer garden, picnic area and kid zone, plus 3D animation.

The ballpark is designed to enhance easy access and the entire fan experience. Along with many seating options, the stadium features eight 15' by 20' private suites, each with 12 seats overlooking the field. The ballpark will feature multiple "neighborhoods" throughout the concourse, with a beer garden in right-center field, a bar in the left-field corner and a picnic area behind the left-field wall. At the new stadium, towering metal poles have been inserted for better lighting and to give the locals an immersive game-day experience.


This summer, the Boxcars plan to organize events like Throwback Tuesdays, Double Dog Days on Wednesdays, Thirsty Thursdays, and Fireworks Fridays. Over the weekend, the team will sponsor giveaways and other events.

Visitors will have easy access to Hagerstown's landmark Cultural Trail alongside the ballpark. A half-mile walkway connects attractions that include historic sites, shopping, fine dining at area restaurants located in the downtown Arts & Entertainment District, City Park and the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts.

Chuck Domino, president of Domino Management and Consulting LLC, a minor league consulting firm, believes attractions adjacent to the ballpark will be the key for non-baseball fans. "Baseball fans are great and you need them as your core, but we really want to build the stadium to attract casual fans who may not watch any of the game," he said.

Although the ballpark is expected to draw mostly from Washington County, and surrounding counties in Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania, Chuck believes that fans will show up to support the team and learn about Hagerstown's history from its design. Hagerstown's location alongside I-81 and I-70, and relative proximity to Baltimore and Washington, DC, plus the inaugural season itself is an attraction that may persuade people to visit Hagerstown.

"This is a once-in-a-generation, multi-purpose and impactful project," Dan says. "It's a whole new ballgame."



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Reflect, Rethink, and Reimagine Cumberland

Written by: **Dan Whetzel**

AS CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND, UNDERGOES MAJOR CONSTRUCTION
ALLEGANY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS RESEARCH ITS HISTORY



Artist's rendering of major construction and renovation of Baltimore Street in downtown Cumberland.

COURTESY OF COCHRAN STUDIOS, PROJECT DESIGNER

Baltimore Street looking west, 1940s.

COURTESY DAN WHETZEL COLLECTION

*Baltimore Street
Cumberland, Md*

Allegany High School students have been actively engaged in preserving and documenting Cumberland’s history during the 2023-2024 academic year. Their work focused on Baltimore Street, the city’s primary commercial and service corridor for more than 200 years. Timing of the assignment was important because over the past year officials directed one of the most significant undertakings in city history—**“Reimagine Cumberland.”** The major design and construction work meant familiar features and views would be removed and likely forgotten over time. Students enrolled in Historical Research Methods class seized the opportunity to reflect on the changes while researching the commercial and historical importance of the corridor. Results of their research and creative efforts will be displayed in a major exhibit at the Allegany Museum during the summer of 2024.

Brian White, instructor for Historical Research Methods class, recalled the impetus for the project occurred when construction began on the downtown mall in 2023. “We thought it would be the perfect time to document Baltimore Street. We also discussed the Reimagine project and began to narrow the focus of our work. It was decided that noteworthy buildings along Baltimore Street would be researched and documented with written narratives. An important part of the students’ work was to investigate how the shoppers’ experiences

evolved over time from the “old downtown” to suburban shopping centers and indoor malls. Those changes weren’t confined to a particular city like Cumberland, but were experienced nationwide. The history of Baltimore Street and Reimagine Cumberland offered opportunities to explore those changes over time.”

One major trend students identified was the transition from family owned businesses to chain stores, and other “big box” discounters. Autumn Parsons, student, explained that Murphy’s and McCrory’s were typical 5 and 10 cent stores. “Today, dollar stores have taken their place. I also learned how important the downtown stores were to shoppers because they were all located in one area. The local businesses lost popularity when they could not compete with the big box discounters that moved into the area.” Autumn also researched Schwarzenbach’s and Burton’s men’s clothing stores, businesses that appealed to different economic groups. Both stores closed and remain memories for older residents.

Carli Atkinson and Kinsey Hostetler focused on special events and celebrations that were part of the Baltimore

Left to right: Mya Hare, Sara Schram, and Daniel Ly researching Rosenbaum’s department store.

PHOTO BY BRIAN WHITE





Top to bottom: Autumn Parsons researching Cumberland's history; Sam Wu choosing old photos; and Abigail Britton scanning photos for production. PHOTOS BY BRIAN WHITE

Street experience in decades past. According to Carli and Kinsey, “In the past, Baltimore Street was the center of holiday shopping and special events, like the 1955 Fort Cumberland bicentennial parade that was one of the largest in city history. Even though changes have occurred, we believe the city has preserved many of the downtown traditions. In particular, the Christmas tree lighting and New Years Eve celebration attracts residents to downtown.”

Nolan Tabb was responsible for documenting hotels. He found that in the past hotels and passenger rail service were closely related. Not only was the massive Queen City Hotel a lodging option, but also the Brunswick Hotel, a recently demolished landmark located within yards of the B&O Railroad passenger facility. Ownership of the Brunswick property was researched and incorporated into the narrative, as was the nearby Windsor, Algonquin, Olympia, and Fort Cumberland hotels. Only older residents recall the Windsor, while the Fort Cumberland and Algonquin currently serve as senior living facilities. “There have been a lot of changes over the years, mostly caused by how people travel,” concluded Nolan.

Daniel Ly, Sara Schram, and Maya Hare studied Rosenbaum's department store and the major changes that occurred on Baltimore Street during the late 1970s when the first pedestrian mall was designed. The first mall followed in the footsteps of the Cumberland Urban Renewal Agency's (CURA) comprehensive redevelopment of center city. City officials decided to close Baltimore Street to vehicle traffic, thereby creating a pedestrian mall that would compete with the soon to be completed indoor Country Club Mall in LaVale. Implementation of the plan created controversy among store owners and residents—some favored keeping the “old downtown” while others thought the changes would rejuvenate town center. The students found similarities between the discussions of the first mall and today's Reimagine Cumberland project that will reopen Baltimore Street to vehicle traffic. The students' research and written narrative of Baltimore Street redevelopments will be included in the 2024 edition of *Journal of the Alleghenies*, perhaps the first student article to be featured in the publication.

Abigail Britton undertook the task of examining historic photographs that augmented the written narratives submitted by groups. According to Abigail, “Hundreds of photographs were examined and the best ones were selected



TIMELINE

1754 Fort Cumberland is built by the British to aid against French hostility in the Ohio Valley during the start of the French and Indian War.

Cumberland originated in 1754 when the British built Fort Cumberland in response to French hostilities in the Ohio River Valley. Strategically located at the fork of the Potomac River and Wills Creek, near what is today the intersection of Washington, Greene and Baltimore streets, the Fort served as a key military outpost during the French and Indian War.

1765 The British leave the fort — a small settlement remains.

After 1765, British troops abandoned Fort Cumberland; however a small settlement, which had grown up around the garrison, remained to become the center of Cumberland. The city was incorporated in 1787 and was expanded to include the current downtown district in 1798.

1787 The city is officially incorporated.

In 1790, shortly after the formal establishment of Cumberland, a small wooden bridge, very close to the present day Baltimore Street bridge, was present over Wills Creek.

1795 The General Assembly of Maryland establishes well defined market regulations for the city's first market.

As town development occurred, the east side of the creek began taking on the chief importance as a business center. By 1830, Mechanic Street was the main thoroughfare; it continued so for many years afterward and in the matter of chief stores and shops, created Baltimore Street until after the Civil War.

1806 The National Road is authorized and the Baltimore turnpike is built.

The Federal Government authorizes the building of the National Road from the Ohio River to Cumberland; the Baltimore turnpike from Baltimore to Cumberland is constructed.

1810 Development shapes the city's east side into a business center.

Development shapes the east side of the city into the rivals Baltimore Street, the current Baltimore Street.

1813 Bedford Street renamed Baltimore Street.

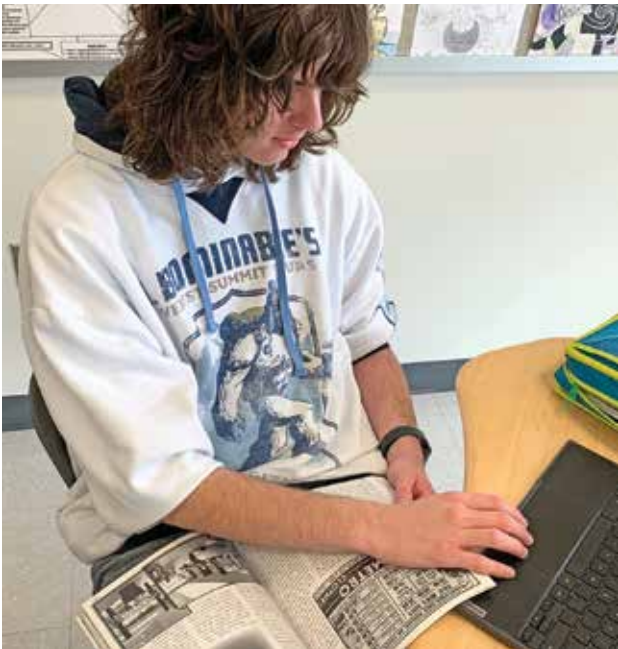
Bedford Street is increasingly referred to as Baltimore Street due to its connection to the recently constructed turnpike.

1821 Cumberland Road and Baltimore Road completed.



Emmanuel Kujenga (front), graphic designer and Nikola Litten merged photos and text, keeping in mind design challenges with each finished panel being almost seven foot high and four foot wide.

PHOTO BY BRIAN WHITE



Top to bottom: Carli Atkinson and Kinsey Hostetler focused on special events and celebrations from decades past; Nolan Tabb was responsible for documenting hotels; and Carter Rice supplied additional research.

PHOTOS BY BRIAN WHITE

for scanning. We identified stores and dates for each photograph that would be included in the displays.” Residents will no doubt have personal memories of the stores depicted in the panels. Each photograph was then forwarded to Nikola Litten who edited the images to make them suitable for the panels. Editing older photographs often requires a significant amount of time due to the aging process and unintended damage.

When students’ written narratives concluded, the texts were forwarded to Emmanuel Kujenga, graphic designer. Artistic creativity blended with designing skills as Emmanuel merged photos with text. Each panel was designed keeping in mind the finished product would be 83” x 46”. “I collaborated with Mr. White and other students when laying out the panels. All 24 panels will be displayed along the corridor according to the way businesses were located on Baltimore Street, so museum visitors will get the feel of walking along historic Baltimore Street.”

Allegany students benefited from the partnership of Ruth Davis-Rogers, Cumberland Historic Planner/Preservation Coordinator. “Brian and I talked about collaborating on a city project and we both thought that Reimagine Cumberland offered a great opportunity to engage students in documenting history. A quote on the cost of materials was submitted with a grant application to Preservation Maryland. They awarded money for the Allegany project and I am pleased that students have been engaged in telling Cumberland’s history. This program involved students on many different levels.”

Students also benefitted from Ruth’s efforts to make available documents dated from the earliest days through Reimagine Cumberland. The artifacts provided an accurate timeline for narratives and hands on research for students.

Brian White is complimentary of the students’ work. “The project required critical thinking on many different levels. Students performed primary and secondary research that included locating documents and artifacts. They also interviewed residents about their personal experiences with Baltimore Street. It is interesting that our collection of oral histories from past Historical Research classes were consulted to support the current class. We now have a body of historical research that is a great resource for us and the community.”

The exhibit is scheduled to open on May 25, 2024, at the Allegany Museum located at 3 Pershing Street, Cumberland, Maryland.



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