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Story suggestions are welcome — human interest, activities, places, dining and shopping in this region will be considered.

Please include your name, address, phone number and email (if available). We cannot promise the return of unsolicited materials, but we will make every effort to do so.



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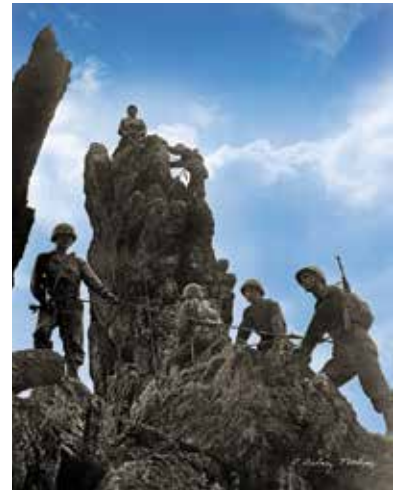
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ON THE COVER

WWII soldiers from the 28th Infantry Division train at the U.S. Army’s Low Altitude Assault Climbing School at Seneca Rocks, WV, during the summer of 1943.

See “Climbing to Victory” on page 30.

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All Earth Eco Tours: *Having a Positive Impact*

YEAR-ROUND TOURS, ACTIVITIES,
LEARNING EXPERIENCES, AND TEAM BUILDING

Written by: **Mary Reisinger**

Photography provided by: **All Earth Eco Tours**



When participation at parks and other outdoor areas ballooned in the mid-1900s, the National Park Service and other organizations developed guidelines to reduce visitors' negative impact on natural spaces. These ideas came to be known as Leave No Trace (LNT). Carol and Crede Calhoun were early proponents for experiencing the outdoors while also preserving the environment.

Carol grew up in Northern Ontario, the daughter of the Superintendent of Parks for the Credit Valley Conservation Authority, fully immersed in outside activities. As a teen, she worked at a summer camp on the Ottawa River, where it was possible to canoe into Algonquin Park. Campers came for two or four week sessions for horseback

Above: Kayaking tours near Deep Creek Lake, MD.

Inset: Carol and Crede Calhoun enjoying the outdoors with their dog, Apollo.

riding, canoeing, sailing, and hiking under the supervision of experienced guides like Carol.

Crede grew up in Cleveland, developing an early affinity for the natural world. His job for an outdoor outfitter and work with Wilderness Trails gave him the opportunity to lead trips to wild places such as Dolly Sods, which introduced him to West Virginia. An excellent photographer and telemark skier, Crede moved to Snowshoe to ski, race, and operate a ski photography business called Mountain View Photography



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before moving to Deep Creek Lake, where he produced images for local businesses and tourism publications. He served as a whitewater rafting guide and led trips on the Cheat River for the Blackwater Outdoor Center.

Crede and Carol met when Carol and a group of friends enjoyed a weekend of adventure in West Virginia that included rafting on the Cheat River. The two nature lovers soon married and bought a home in Friendsville, Maryland. The natural resources of this area had made it popular with Native Americans and later with European settlers. The town of Friendsville established here initially boomed, with an economy based on timber, coal, and other industries, but by the second half of the 20th Century, it had become a place where few people lived and worked. Gradually, the town revitalized around its other assets, including its setting on the Youghiogheny River, the only river designated as wild and scenic in Maryland.

Carol and Crede set up Windrush Gallery in their home; it was a place that showcased the work of Crede and other local artists. Crede's photography appeared in many magazines, including *Audubon*, *Outside*, *Southern Living*, *Maryland Magazine*, *Mid-Atlantic Country*, *Paddler*, and *Backpacker*. His work featuring whitewater kayaking was installed at the Baltimore/Washington International Airport.

When their daughter Caileigh arrived, Crede and Carol decided they didn't want to raise a child in a home that was partly an art gallery filled with things she couldn't touch. They also preferred to have her spend as much time outdoors as she could. This, coupled with their ideal location in an area rich with woods and water, was the genesis of All Earth Eco Tours. Of course the business was designed to conform to the LNT standards.

All Earth Eco Tours evolved around the couple's interests and skills. Over time, they developed a wide range of year-round tours, activities, learning experiences, and team building exercises designed to strengthen the connection between people and nature. These have included hikes around the Youghiogheny River; snowshoe expeditions in Swallow Falls State Park (winter hikes if there isn't enough snow); exploration of Dolly Sods, the Cranesville



Year-round adventure tours are available for small to large groups and anywhere in between.

Swamp, and other wild areas; experiential workshops on topics such as bush craft, birds of prey, herpetology, nature photography, or team building; tours and camps for people interested in learning about small family farms and their practices; yoga sessions in Friendsville's community park or at your lodging location; and kayaking on the Savage River Reservoir.

In the decades following the development of LNT, concern has been expressed that thoughtful effort to protect the environment should be made not only in wilderness areas, but also in all walks of life. Fittingly, in addition to running the business, Carol and Crede have worked to sustain the wild areas of the region as well as to promote everyday living in healthy relationship with the natural world.

As a young man, Crede told a newspaper reporter that he wanted to learn the ways of old mountaineers so that this culture could be passed along to future generations. Crede said that this knowledge was as valuable as gold to him, better than gold, in fact, because it was scarcer.

Sadly, Crede passed away unexpectedly in August of 2022, but he succeeded in his life goal of learning and teaching about the natural world.

Because he did this so well, All Earth Eco Tours continues his legacy under the steady leadership of Carol, their daughter Caileigh, and Caileigh's husband Jose Vitale. The family, along with the Feral Nut (aka Mark Pankowski), raptor specialists Deron and Sherry Medor, and many other members of the team make it possible for All Earth Eco Tours to offer their usual wide range of recreational and learning experiences.

The Garrett County Commissioners recently presented a proclamation to All Earth Eco Tours, recognizing and celebrating the business' 30th anniversary. Their efforts in outdoor advocacy, preservation, and recreational entrepreneurship have helped contribute to a legacy that future generations will continue to enjoy for years to come.

Check the website for current information and to book your own adventure. <https://allearthtours.com>

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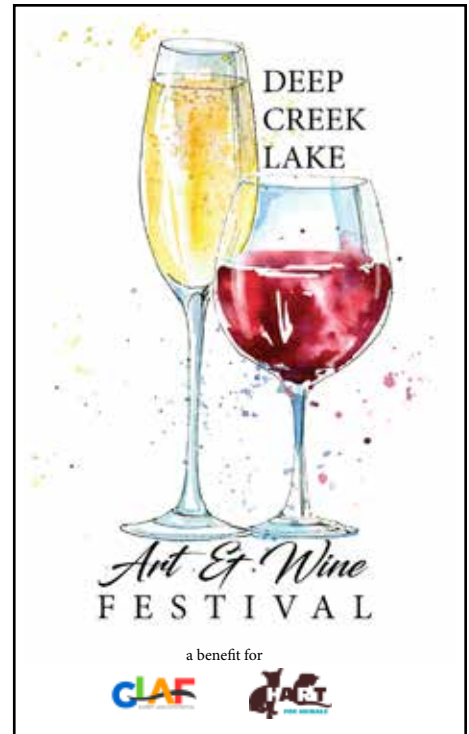


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WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD



Written by: **Dan Whetzel**
PHOTO BY MIKE CALHOUN

“We had a great 2022.”

Wes Heinz’ news about the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad’s past success is matched only by his excitement for 2023 and beyond. The WMSR Executive Director noted the railroad weathered the Covid years and a weak economy to post record numbers and launch new events for guests.

Propelling the WMSR’s recent success has been the #1309 Baldwin locomotive, a former Chesapeake & Ohio engine that first saw service in 1949 in the coal fields of Kentucky and West Virginia. The massive locomotive is now one of Allegany County’s premier tourist attractions and the largest steam engine in regular service in the United States. Since returning to the rails several years ago, the train has attracted visitors from around the country and world who can experience the 2-6-6-2 up close at the Western Maryland Railway station in Cumberland and at the Cumberland & Pennsylvania Depot in Frostburg. The locomotive is unique in many ways, including its history as the last of the Mallet class steam locomotives to be built for North American railroads by Baldwin Locomotive Works.

The #1309 is complemented by the #501 Western Maryland circus color diesel that has been a steady workhorse on the WMSR since 1995, and the #558 Western Maryland General Electric diesel. All three locomotives saw service

Facing page: Locomotive #1309, constructed in 1949 by the Baldwin Locomotive Works, Chesapeake & Ohio Railway, was built to handle the railroad’s heaviest coal trains throughout Kentucky and West Virginia until it was retired in 1956.

After a meticulous and extensive restoration, #1309’s first season on the WMSR became an outstanding tourist attraction, operating trains between Cumberland and Frostburg, Maryland. The 1309 is now the largest regularly operating steam locomotive in the country.



Wes Heinz, WMSR Executive Director

PHOTO COURTESY KELLY LYNCH



as a record setting 60,000 passengers boarded the WMSR in 2022. According to Wes, the trajectory of sales increase puts the railroad on track for 70,000 passengers in 2023 — another record setting year. Contributing to the success is year round service on weekends and expanded private bookings that offer photo shoots and additional events for enthusiasts.

One of the special trains that attracts national attention is the Polar Express. Based on the popular Christmas movie

and book, WMSR guests enjoy the movie soundtrack and hot chocolate when boarding coaches for a trip to the North Pole and a visit from Santa Claus. Wes notes the Polar Express is not just for children, but has also caught the attention of all age groups who return annually to enjoy the ride, festivities, and the silver sleigh bell keepsake. Ridership to the North Pole in 2022 exceeded 26,000 passengers.

The Polar Express caught the attention of NBC’s Today Show in December 2022. The segment brought national attention to the train and was a highlight of the season.

Additional special trains for 2023 include “Moonlight on the Mountain Train,” and “Allegheny Mountain Dinner Train” running in May, the “Ice Cream Train” beginning in June, and “Murder Mystery Trains” in February.

In October, the “Pumpkin Patch Limited” will once again depart Cumberland for a destination at scenic Helmstetter’s Curve. “The fall foliage special is accompanied by spooky

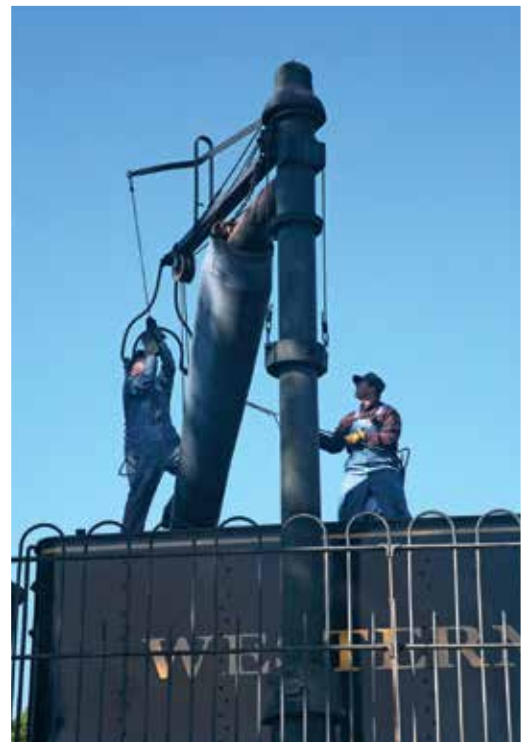


music and pumpkins for all guests,” according to Wes. “We also found that adults enjoy the experience as much as the children. Everyone has a great time.”

The most unique program for rail enthusiasts is “Hands on the Throttle,” an individually scheduled event that allows a guest to ride in the #1309 cab and temporarily take controls under the guidance of a WMSR engineer. The guest engineer leads a freight train toward Frostburg (at designated locations) while also receiving an in depth lesson about the locomotive from WMSR staff. The popular program is typically booked for months into the future, so early contact about availability is suggested.

Photo charters in February 2023 brought visitors and rail enthusiasts from five different countries to capture images of the #1309 in Chesapeake & Ohio lettering. The familiar Western Maryland Railway fireball logo was temporarily covered and then re-lettered to the original C&O livery for the 7 day morning and evening runs featuring freight cars and a caboose. Photographers rode in passenger cars that were pulled separately by a diesel locomotive. Amateur and professional photographers also stationed themselves along scenic passages, including Helmstetter’s Curve in Corriganville. Photo charters continue to be a part of the railroad’s offerings into the summer and fall seasons.

Regular passenger service is provided by the “Frostburg Flyer,” a four hour round trip that departs the WMSR station at Canal Place



Above: Passengers board the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad at Cumberland’s Western Maryland Station for their excursion to Frostburg.

Inset: WMSR crew members prepare for departure after filling tanks in the tender (a special car containing water and fuel).

BOTH PHOTOS BY MIKE CALHOUN



Above: Children enjoy a photo op with #1309.
PHOTO BY BRETT BODENSCHATZ

Above right: The popular Polar Express — a magical, family-friendly event that's fun for all ages, complete with hot chocolate and cookies served aboard the train.
PHOTO BY DAN FOYE

Right: In October, the Pumpkin Patch Limited, with spooky music and decoration, travels to Helmstetter's Curve where all guests receive a pumpkin. *PHOTO BY MIKE CALHOUN*



in Cumberland and works its way to Frostburg, Maryland, a distance of 16 miles. The Frostburg Flyer is alternately powered by diesels and the #1309 steam engine depending on days of the week, so check the schedule for specific assignments.

Long time WMSR enthusiasts recall the #734, a 2-8-0 locomotive named "Mountain Thunder" that resembled the Western Maryland engines of the steam era. Purchased in 1991 and returned to service in 1993, the workhorse provided power until 2016 when federal requirements necessitated that it be taken out of service pending an overhaul. According to Wes, plans to rebuild the #734 and bring it back to regular service on the WMSR are contingent on funding.

Wes is quick to credit the WMSR's success to a skilled and dedicated staff. "We now have a staff for complete service, so we can focus on putting money into our equipment.

Our lounge car and other equipment received a complete refurbishing over the winter and are now premiere offerings."

"We are also proud of the fact that our staff receives a living wage and an education package for tuition and supplies. All the staff lives locally, so the money stays here. Our operation makes a 17 million dollar impact on the local economy, and we expect to grow that number."

The Western Maryland Scenic Railroad boards passengers at the former Western Maryland Railway station at 13 Canal Place in Cumberland, Maryland. For further information on events and scheduled service, contact the WMSR office at **301-759-4400** or website <https://wmsr.com>.

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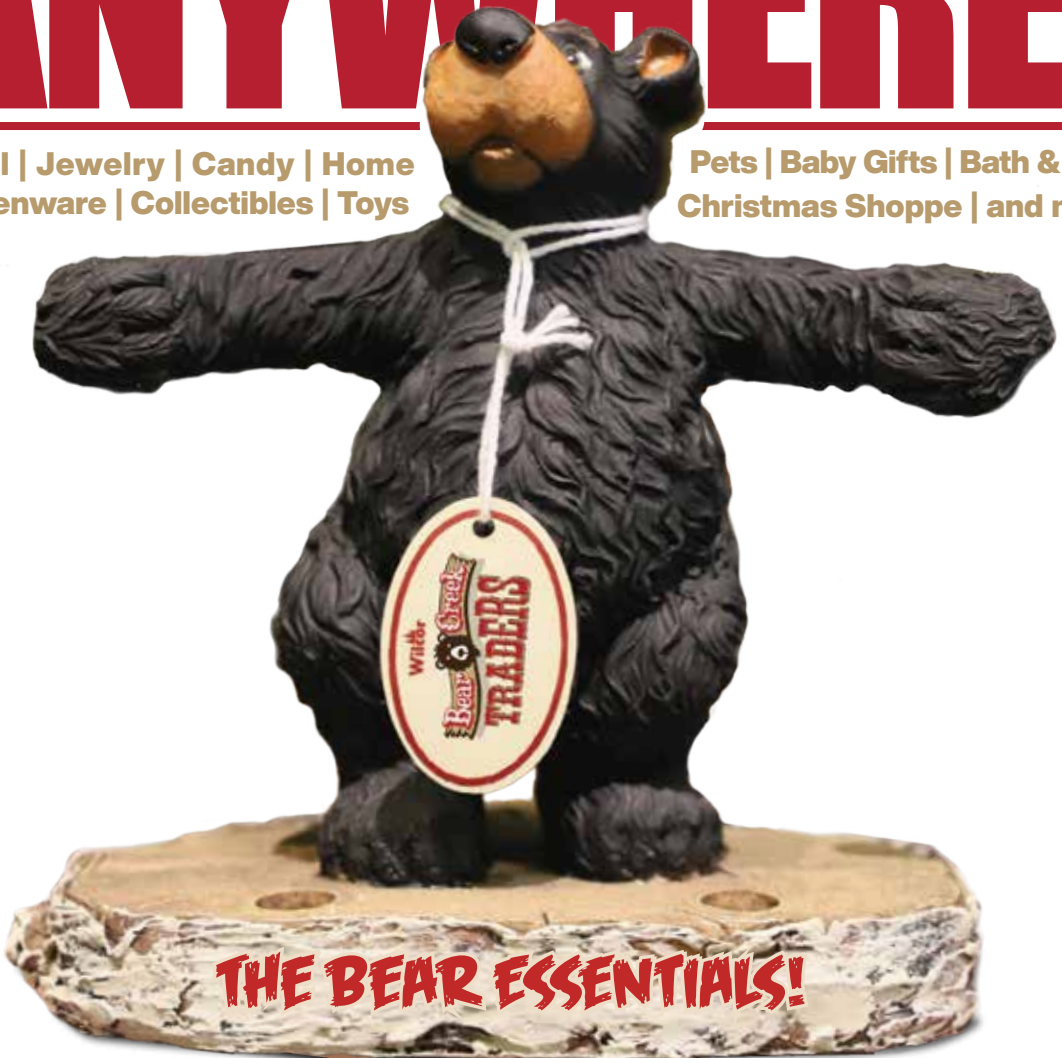


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The LaVale Toll Gate House, 1907
1907 GILBERT PHOTO STUDIO, COURTESY ALBERT AND ANGELA FELDSTEIN

Written by: **Shelby Calhoun**

Allegany County, MD, is excited to announce the opening of the LaVale Toll Gate House for tours during the 2023 season. LaVale's toll gate house, a two-story brick structure built in 1835-1836, is a seven-sided basic polygon plan. A one-story Tuscan columned porch extends around the five outer sides of the building. Toll gate houses were developed to levy tolls on a stretch of road in order to finance its maintenance and improvement. The toll gate house in LaVale, MD, was the first constructed toll gate house on the National Road after the state took ownership of the Maryland portion of the National

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Road in 1835. It is the last remaining toll house in Maryland and is listed on the National Register for Historic Places.

Signage on the site of the toll gate house shows the original toll rates, a system developed on the estimated damage certain vehicles and animals could cause to the road. Rates were identified for scores of sheep, hogs or cattle, horse and rider, sleighs drawn by horse or oxen, and wagons with varying wheel sizes.

The toll gate houses were used for the tollgate keeper and his family. The tollgate keeper position was not limited to an 8-hour day, but involved any time of day or night. The toll house located in LaVale has been renovated to include an office, bedroom, antique furniture, two fireplaces, and other amenities. If you go upstairs to the bedroom, you can actually see how the tollgate keeper could get up at night and look out the windows to observe travelers.

The charging of fees required a gate, or pike, to be built across the road, hence the term “turnpike” that is associated with the National Road. Travelers who did not pay the fee were termed “pikers.” Turnpikes were placed at strategic points along the road where it was difficult for travelers to evade paying, such as at bridges or where the lie of the land constricted the road.

Despite the inconvenience of tolls, turnpikes were among the best roads available. They were often built with specific construction requirements to ensure their designation as first-class roads, often requiring drainage ditches and culverts, as well as specifying surface materials.

When Congress first met after the achievement of Independence with the adoption of the



Top: Tour guide, Ellen McDaniel Weissler, is ready to receive visitors at the LaVale Toll Gate House.

Bottom: The main living area at the Toll Gate House is furnished with period pieces and other daily living items.

PHOTOS COURTESY ALLEGANY COUNTY TOURISM



The upstairs bedroom at the LaVale Toll Gate House with period furnishings. PHOTO BY MIKE CALHOUN

Federal Constitution, the lack of good roads was a major topic. But it was not until the year 1806, when Jefferson was President, that the proposition for a National Road took practical shape. The original National Road, as envisioned by Congress, commenced at Cumberland, MD, and ended at Wheeling (then Virginia) on the banks of the Ohio River.

Today, the National Road is credited with having provided vital access for Americans interested in westward exploration. Stop by 14302 National Highway, LaVale, MD, on the following dates for interpretive history and a glimpse back in time. You'll also see the original mile marker displaying the distance to the next towns in opposite directions.

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2023 – Operating hours 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm, on the following dates:

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Saturday, May 20

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Saturday, June 3 (*20th Annual National Road Festival*)
Sunday, June 4 (*20th Annual National Road Festival*)
June 10, 11, 16, 17 & 18 (*Museum Week*)

July

Saturday, July 1
Saturday, July 15
Saturday, July 29

August

Saturday, August 12
Saturday, August 26

September

Saturday, September 9 (*Heritage Days*)
Sunday, September 10 (*Heritage Days*)
Saturday, September 23

October

Saturday, October 7
Saturday, October 21

The schedule of events is subject to change without notice. There is no cost to tour the Toll House.



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Waffle Rock – What is it?

FOSSILIZED DINOSAUR LIZARD SKIN,
PREHISTORIC PICTOGRAPH, GEOLOGICAL FORMATION
OR SOMETHING EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL...



Written by: **Shelby Calhoun**

When the “Waffle Rock” was found in the area of the Allegheny Mountains near Elk Garden, West Virginia, many theories of what it was were suggested. Some thought that the pattern was the fossil of a large dinosaur or lizard skin. The geometric pattern on one side of the rock made some think it had been etched or carved by people of a bygone era and still others were convinced that the rock was something from “out of this world” left here by extra-terrestrials.



Waffle Rock can be viewed near the West Virginia Scenic Overlook at Jennings Randolph Lake in Mineral County, WV.

BOTH PHOTOS BY MIKE CALHOUN

When geologic experts studied the rock, it was determined that after millions of years which included the forming of the mountains, and many other changes to the earth, sand was deposited by ancient streams and later it became hard rock or sandstone. Through millions of years of geologic activity various physical and chemical processes took place. Over time cracks in the rock began to fill with iron oxide (Hematite) that leached from the surrounding



PHOTO BY MIKE CALHOUN



Above: The West Virginia Scenic Overlook at Jennings Randolph Lake.

Insets: The Adams family enjoys camping at Jennings Randolph Lake. Pond fishing at the Robert W. Craig Campground, jet skiing on the lake, and playing at the beach are just some of their favorite activities.

rocks by percolating water. This iron oxide mixed with the sand grains in the cracks and formed a super cement holding the surrounding sandstone pieces together. As the surface of the rock was exposed to wind and rain, the sand without the iron oxide slowly washed away but the sand mixed with the iron oxide did not, resulting in the strange looking rock.

Waffle rock is rare, but the example we're referring to is on display at Jennings Randolph Lake in Mineral County, WV. Other examples are at Tea Creek Mountain in Pocahontas, WV, and also in Canada. There's also a small piece of the rock on display at the Smithsonian Institute of Natural History in Washington, DC.

If you're visiting Jennings Randolph Lake to see the Waffle Rock, many other opportunities are available for enjoying outdoor family fun and adventure. Boating, fishing, camping,

hiking, nature walks, cabins, whitewater rafting, swimming and 3-D archery are just some of the activities available at Jennings Randolph Lake and nearby.

Visit the Jennings Randolph Lake website at <http://nab.usace.army.mil/Missions/DamsRecreation/JenningsRandolphLake.aspx>



Compton's Mill:

Built and Preserved by a Remarkable Family



Written by: **Mary Reisinger**

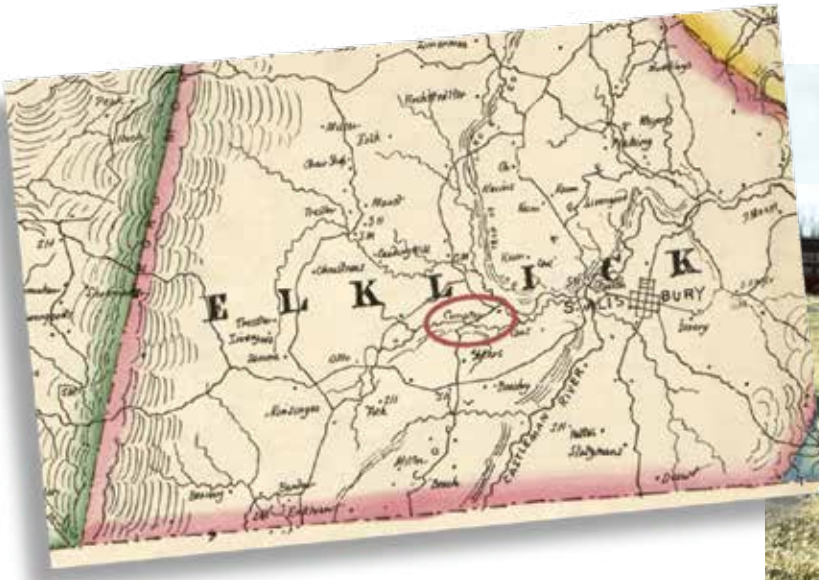
PHOTO BY MARY REISINGER

In the late 1700s, brothers John and Ebenezer Griffith acquired land near Salisbury, Pennsylvania. They constructed two log buildings: a home and a grist mill to process local corn and wheat. At the end of 1823, this property was purchased by Abraham Morrison for \$2000. Morrison, in turn, sold the mill to Jonathan Hostetler in 1836 for \$2500. Hostetler operated the mill until 1868, at which time Samuel Compton entered the picture.

Samuel's branch of the Compton family in America originated with Elycum (or Eliacum) Compton, who had immigrated from France and settled in New Jersey. Elycum and his wife Sarah had a son, Robert. Elycum died before the Revolutionary War, but General George Washington often had meals at the boarding house of the Widow Compton and was impressed by her young son. At Washington's

request, eight-year-old Robert joined the general's staff as aide and messenger. Robert was once stopped by soldiers and searched, but the papers he was carrying were never found because they were in the lining of his boots. Though too young to be on any military rolls, he was among the soldiers that made the famous crossing of the Delaware River in 1776.

Robert Compton was apprenticed to a tailor in his teens, and continued this trade as an adult. He and his wife Lydia had twelve children. The family moved to Berlin and then Salisbury, Pennsylvania. After his wife's death, he lived with a grandson in Grantsville, Maryland, where he died in 1856, just before his 88th birthday, and was buried in the Grantsville Cemetery. A Revolutionary War Star has been placed at his grave.



Robert and Lydia's second child, Phineas, was a gunsmith and tinner in Salisbury for most of his life. He is credited with inventing the first modern meat-cutting machine and manufacturing it for several years. Just two years before his death he and his son Samuel bought property in the New Germany area of Western Maryland. The Compton School, a log structure where the Comptons lived for a time in New Germany, is thought to have been built in the late 1700s. As a very early building and the only remaining log cabin school in the area, it was moved to Spruce Forest Artisan Village in 1989; it can still be visited there today.

Phineas and Adaline's (or Adeline's) son Samuel began learning gunsmithing from his father at age thirteen; he also acquired expertise as a tinner, cobbler, and tailor. As a young man, Samuel bought two adjoining pieces of land on Elk Lick Creek; one of these properties was the site of the Hostetler mill. Samuel ran the older, simpler grist mill for a short time, but then built a more efficient mill to better meet local demand. The new mill stood about fifty feet from the old mill. Much of the stone and lumber for the new mill was brought by sled from remote parts of the family's property.

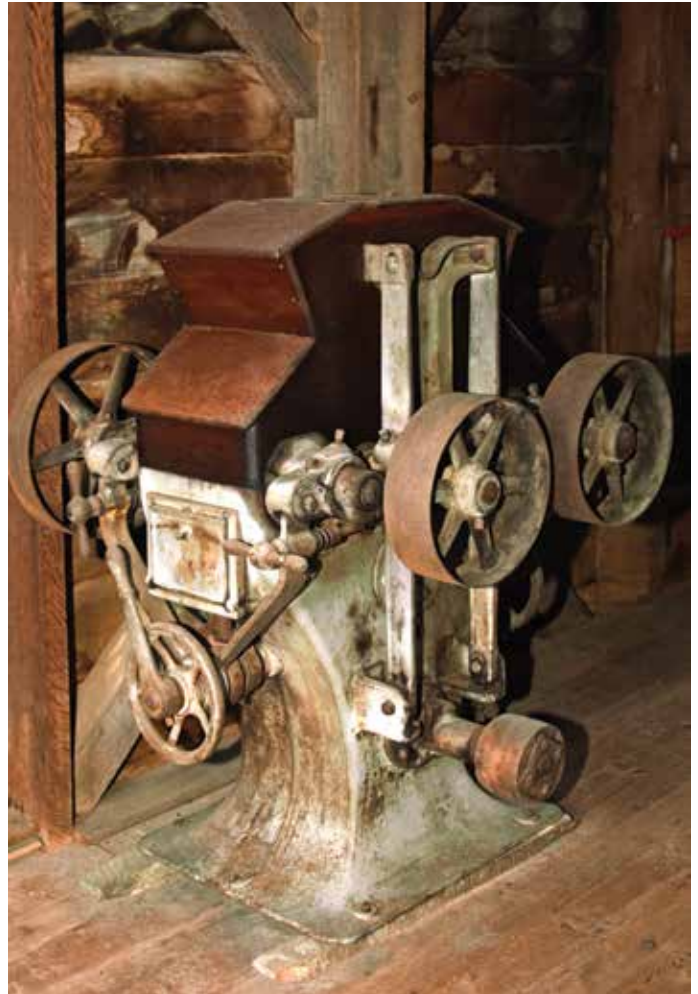
Israel Schrock, builder of the mill, has gone down in history as "a highly temperamental but exceptionally skilled craftsman." He insisted that the stone for the mill foundations and walls must be taken from the tops of ridges where it would be stronger, he felt, due to being subjected to wind and weather.

Map: Late 1800s Somerset County, PA, map of landowners shows Elk Lick Township boundaries. The name Compton is highlighted.

Top Right: Robert Compton's grave marker in Grantsville, MD, cemetery. *PHOTO BY MARY REISINGER*

Right: Innovations added by Demetrius Compton include this long strand processing system using different rollers for processing oats, buckwheat flour, cornmeal, and pastry flour. *PHOTO BY SAM HOUSLEY*





The interior of the mill and its equipment remain much as they were when in operation due to Jay Compton's preservation efforts. The wooden chutes pictured on the left circulated raw and partially processed grain, which went up via small cups in vertical chutes and down in angled chutes by gravity.

PHOTOS BY SAM HOUSLEY

Likewise, he chose white oak trees from exposed areas for their strength. Beams, head-posts, and roof trussing were fastened with six-sided white oak pins. The six-sided pin in a round hole is a traditional shipbuilding technique. Care was taken not to use wood with knotholes as these areas might contaminate the flour with sap.

On the exterior wall, a stone dressed and faced by Samuel Compton displays his name and the year 1871, but the lettering on the building shows 1872 as the year the new gristmill was complete, and it was 1873 before it began operation. The former mill had run on the flow of the creek with an undershot wheel, but the new mill had a larger, heavier overshot wheel, and dams were built to regulate the flow of the water. The old millrace was repurposed to power a sawmill. The new mill



Original paper sacks used nearly 100 years ago for flours and meals produced at Compton's Mill.

PHOTOS BY SAM HOUSLEY

On January 6, 1930, Demetrius Compton reflected on his eighty years while sitting in his office at the mill during a snowstorm:

My Birthday January 6, 1930

As I sit in my old mill room,
With the snowflakes flying thick and fast,
And the wind goes by in howling, mournful blast,
My mind goes back to the days of yore
Some three-score years or more
To the lads and lassies gay,
Who were my comrades of that day;
But where, O where are they?
Old Father Time has garnered them all,
And sent them to the Great Beyond,
Where the shores are green
And the suns are bright
And flowers bloom
And blessings flow forevermore
And I am left a lone solitaire
To view the passing throng
But with optimistic faith,
As to my fate
I too, must pass along,
With footsteps headed west
Toward the land of the setting sun,
And eternal rest;
A fate decreed to every one—
And then the question comes
Will we, or will we not,
Be numbered with the blest?



was equipped with “buhr” stones and was known to produce excellent flour and meal. In fact, the letters IXL on the building refer to the slogan “I excel.”

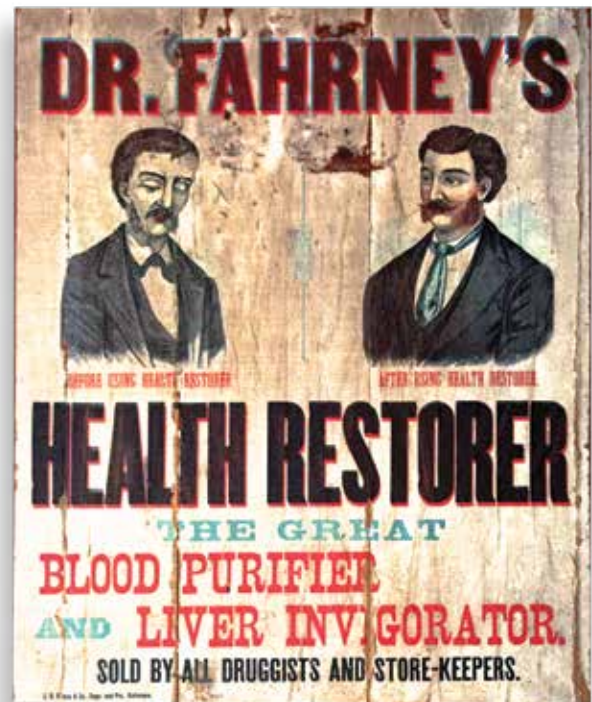
A neighbor of the Compton family, John C. Livengood, used a large wagon with three sets of wheels (changed to whichever size was needed) pulled by a team of six horses, to haul goods from Baltimore to Wheeling, West Virginia. The rig was famous for the melodious bells on the horses’ harness, and the teamster became known as Bella Hans. When Livengood died and his property was sold at auction, Samuel Compton bought the wagon; it was used for three generations at the Compton Mill, at the farm’s sugar camp, and to convey farm crops. After 140 years of service, the wagon was given by the Allen Compton family to the nearby Springs Museum.

Samuel’s sons divided the two properties. Phineas operated the farm where he was born, and Demetrius took over the operation of the mill. Demetrius, a gifted musician and teacher of instrumental music, appreciated modern improvements. In 1878, he had bought the first steam thresher in the area. He was equally innovative at the mill, instituting a roller mill process that greatly increased productivity.

During World War I, the mill ran all day and most of the night to produce the flour and feed needed by the country.

Demetrius’ son Ward followed his father in managing the mill; he added the bleaching process that made the flour whiter, which consumers considered a mark of quality. Appalachian wheat had long been considered among the most nutritious in the world; however, the bleaching process removed the hull and thus reduced the nutritional value of the flour by nearly a third. Nevertheless, this flour was very popular and, according to Ward’s wife, made excellent bread.

Family members tell a number of stories about the mill. In one anecdote, a neighbor insisted that the men drop his 200 pound sack of flour out of the upper



This original poster on the wall of the mill features a once-popular Hagerstown, MD, elixir, Dr. Fahrney’s Health Restorer. PHOTO BY SAM HOUSLEY

story door rather than lowering it by block and tackle. When the flour hit the wagon bed, the driver was thrown into the air and landed in the dirt road, muddied but unhurt. Another tale is about the moonshine produced behind the saw mill by workers, and bottled and sold as a “health restorer.”

The advent of huge commercial mills rendered small independent mills nearly obsolete. Because it was so difficult to continue making a profit, Ward Compton closed the mill in the late 1930s. Amazingly, it is still standing and in excellent condition, thanks to the determined effort and skill of Ward’s son Jay Compton, fourth generation descendant of Samuel Compton.

Though the mill closed a few years before Jay was born, he has done a great deal of restoration and is still, in his 78th year, looking after the property. The interior of the building remains much as it was when it was a functioning mill. Just inside the doorway is the cornerstone from the old Griffith log farm house, built in 1780. Other mill equipment—stones to grind buckwheat flour, pastry flour, whole wheat flour, and cornmeal; roller mills for products such as oatmeal; the machines used for bleaching; chutes; bagging machinery; the long lever that controlled the waterwheel—remains in place. A storage cupboard holds a supply of paper flour sacks used nearly 100 years ago. A pot-bellied stove stands in the corner of the office.

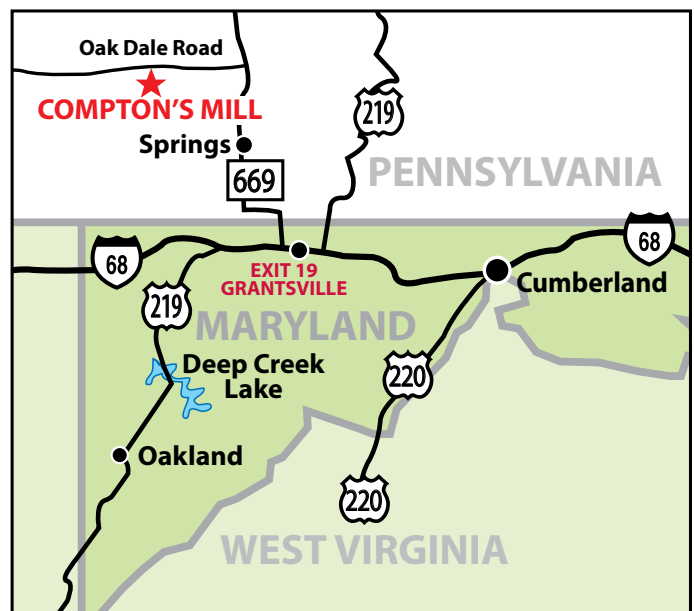


Above: This wheeled barrel was filled with sacks of a customer’s flour, rolled across the floor to the opening, and attached by chains to a pulley system to be lowered to the conveyance below.

Left: Artifacts such as this 1890 account book kept by Demetrius Compton are still in the mill office. *BOTH PHOTOS BY MARY REISINGER*

Outside, the large building with crisp white paint and red trim is beautifully maintained. Its first floor of two-foot-thick stone is followed by several wooden levels, rising to the height of 60 feet. Parts of the hand-dug millrace have been restored. Jay still entertains thoughts of rebuilding and reinstalling the waterwheel if time and health allow. The next generation to care for the mill will be Kristin Compton, Jay’s daughter, who is proud to be carrying on the family tradition.

Though the mill’s interior isn’t open for visitors, anyone can see this striking landmark building by turning on Oak Dale Road from Route 669. If driving from Grantsville, MD, toward Springs, PA, this will be a left turn soon after Mark’s Harness Shop which is on the right. The mill is on the left on Oak Dale, and across from the mill stands the original house built for the Compton family by Israel Schrock. It is a private home still occupied by the family.





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Climbing to Victory

WWII TRAINING MANEUVERS IN NEARBY, WEST VIRGINIA – 1943-44

Written by: **Dan Whetzel**





World War II mobilized millions of soldiers and citizens across the United States, and the Tri-State region was well represented in that historic effort. From production of munitions at home to participating in major battles around the globe, residents readily contributed to winning the largest conflict the world had ever experienced. Everyone played a role and everyone realized how important it was to win the war. There is one local area, however, that has not received the recognition it deserves for being a major contributor to World War II's successful conclusion. Perhaps the isolated location kept it hidden from publicity, or perhaps the years passed too quickly for timely recognition. In any event, the West Virginia Maneuver Area is worthy of recognition because of the role it played in training thousands of soldiers who deployed to all theaters of operation.

Officially called the West Virginia Maneuver Area (WVMA) by the United States Army, it encompassed five counties in the northern half of the Monongahela National Forest and operated from August 1943 to July 1944. The geographic area was vast, mountainous, and sparsely inhabited — all requirements the U.S. Army had in mind when it searched for a suitable location for specialized training programs.

Facing page: WWII soldiers train at the Seneca Rocks peak formation known as Humphrey's Head, south of the Cockscomb.

PHOTOGRAPH BY A. AUBREY BODINE, © COPYRIGHT JENNIFER B. BODINE. COURTESY OF WWW.AAUBREYBODINE.COM

Above: Seneca Rocks, one of the best-known landmarks in West Virginia, is a scenic attraction for visitors, hikers, and rock climbers. The magnificent formation rises nearly 900 feet above the North Fork River and is part of the Spruce Knob–Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area within the Monongahela National Forest.

In 1943, the rugged Italian peninsula occupied the minds of Allied generals who were planning a major campaign to push the Germans northward. Anticipating the obstacles troops would encounter to carry out that objective, it became apparent the Army needed to establish specialized winter warfare and mountain training programs. Reports that German troops underwent specialized winter training for use in Alaska, Canada, and possibly the Rocky Mountains, added a sense of urgency to finding a suitable location. The West Virginia Maneuver Area with its harsh winters, isolation, and similarities of terrain with the expected destination of fighting brought the Army's vast resources to West Virginia in the summer of 1943.

Residents of Elkins, WV, learned of the Army's plans by reading the newspaper on June 23, 1943. The news release informed residents their town would be headquarters to the maneuver area that was created in cooperation with the Monongahela National Forest and surrounding landowners who allowed use of their land to the federal government. The command fell to the Army XIII Corps that oversaw early arrivals from the 94th Signal Battalion and the 63 Quartermaster Battalion (that was ordered to set up laundry facilities for 40,000 personnel). Soon to follow were military police, engineers, medical personnel and other support units. The friendly invasion must have been cause for conversation among residents in the small town.

Thousands of soldiers arrived in Elkins by truck convoy and special trains, giving the town a festival like atmosphere and crowd. One resident recalled the soldiers' arrival as a "sea of khaki." Maneuver Headquarters was set up in the U.S. Forest Service Supervisor's Office in Elkins. Military camps sprang up across the WVMA. A medical field



hospital, replete with nurses, was established at a Forest recreation area outside of Elkins, known locally as “Stuart Park.” Other units set up near Bluegrass Park and at Wimer Field in South Elkins or in adjacent communities of Bowden, Alpena, Kerens, Montrose, Gladwin, Davis, and Seneca Rocks. A signal corps battalion built communication systems by using telephones, telegraphy, teletype, radios, and messenger pigeons. The herculean task of preparing and distributing 25 tons of food per day fell to the quartermaster. The military buildup made a positive impact on the local economy, particularly at hotels, restaurants and retail stores. Despite the positive influx of funds from “outsiders,” their presence initially caused some apprehension among the locals and Army personnel at headquarters in Elkins.

Cultural differences between residents and troops were poorly addressed by *Mountain Lore*, an informational pamphlet that attempted to interpret Appalachian culture for the newcomers. The handout did little good to overcome doubts some soldiers experienced when confronted with West Virginia’s terrain and “hillbilly” reputation. *Mountain Lore* misinformed soldiers that it was not unusual for a stranger to be startled by a bearded giant suddenly emerging from a thicket with a long barrel rifle in the crook of his arm. Soldiers were also wrongly told that horseback

Downtown Elkins, WV, circa 1940, Davis Avenue and Third Street. These buildings and stores would have been well known to those soldiers lucky enough to have a pass to visit. The YMCA was located not far from here and was a favorite location for troops as it had a C&P Telephone exchange set up for WVMA soldiers to call home or send telegrams to loved ones. PHOTO COURTESY ROBERT C. WHETSELL

riding and walking were the primary means of travel in West Virginia.

Sergeant Sylvan “Woodie” Waldrip, a 23-year-old climbing instructor, recorded his initiation to West Virginia in a 15-page memoir. “It was with mixed feelings of dread and expectation that I went into West Virginia.” Woodie wrote that he heard about how “back woodsy” and “uneducated” the people were and how “outmoded” everything was in the area. Those stereotypes were shattered upon arrival in Elkins. Woodie found Elkins to be “much like any other town I had been in. The same stores, same window displays, advertisements, signs—there was no difference.” Another surprising observation was that all the people wore shoes!

Similar experiences were recorded by the soldiers who enjoyed homemade pies, cakes and other treats offered by residents when they were encountered in the field. Troops reciprocated by providing entertainment at the YMCA,



Left: These two soldiers, men from the 95th Infantry Division, are posing in front of Seneca Rocks with their climbing gear. Members of this division were the last unit to train in the WVMA. After D-Day the program closed and units began shipping overseas. The 95th headed to the European Theater and fought in France and Germany.

Richard Schoen (left) and Frank “Lefty” Sadjewski, photographed in June 1944. The soldier in the background with a white stripe on his helmet is a climbing instructor with the MTG. Instructors were required to wear a white strip on their helmets so students could recognize them.

*PHOTO COURTESY ROBERT C. WHETSELL/
RICHARD SCHOEN*

Below: Pup tent encampment area for the U.S. Army’s Low Altitude Assault Climbing School at Seneca Rocks. The camp was located on the Wilbur Kisamore farm just north of Seneca Rocks. Students slept in a field in two man pup tents, while instructors shared five man canvas pyramidal tents with wooden floors in a shaded grove near the river (background). For the training, men were issued special rucksacks and other specialized equipment designed for climbing and fighting in mountainous terrain—several of these rucksacks can be seen in front of the tents.

*PHOTO COURTESY ROBERT C. WHETSELL/
RICHARD SCHOEN*

high school and other venues. While some recreational time was welcomed by instructors, most soldiers soon found themselves engaged in rigorous training programs across the maneuver area, particularly at Seneca Rocks.

Technical advisors from Camp Hale, Colorado, established the assault climbing school at Seneca Rocks, a community found at the junction of WV 28, US 33 and WV 55 in Pendleton County. Known for its scenic beauty and 900-foot Tuscarora rock formation, the rural area underwent a transformation as soldiers deployed and set up a tent community at the base of towering rocks. The Camp Hale detachment included expert mountain climbers from the Army’s Mountain Training Group (MTG), whose members later distinguished themselves in fighting at Riva Ridge, Italy, as part of the 10th Mountain Division.

The climbing school averaged 180 men and officers who underwent training in 14 day cycles that included





28th Infantry Division soldiers scaling Seneca Rocks, August 1943. Week two of the training emphasized rigging, use of assault ropes, rappelling, piton use and more climbing.

PHOTOGRAPH BY A. AUBREY BODINE, © COPYRIGHT JENNIFER B. BODINE. COURTESY OF WWW.AAUBREYBODINE.COM

assaulting the sheer cliff. According to reports, each instructor was assigned 10 men who were initiated into the basics of rock climbing for one week. The weakest four men were “washed out,” after seven days and the remaining six received an additional week of training. Prior to assaulting the cliffs, soldiers practiced climbing and rappelling off wooden climbing towers nicknamed “corn cribs” specially created to teach climbing and belaying to the rookie climbers.

Week two training placed emphasis on rigging, use of assault ropes, rope tying, rappelling, piton use, and pulleys. Associated rock climbing techniques were demonstrated, practiced, and rehearsed until the teams were proficient in all phases of climbing. To demonstrate proficiency, groups made tactical night climbs on unfamiliar cliffs. Despite difficult weather conditions and challenging tasks, only one climber, an instructor, was seriously injured during the assault training school program at Seneca Rocks.

A concurrent program in the WVMA emphasized physical conditioning. During the first week, instruction included night and mountain driving, cross country marches and packboard usage. The second week consisted of exercises commonly called “war games,” in which battalions were given “problems” involving the engagement of enemy forces in rugged terrain. These field exercises ranged in difficulty from setting up simple road blocks to heavy fighting.

The 77th Infantry Divisions experienced the worst conditions of the year when subzero temperatures and blizzard conditions struck the camp. Weapons became coated with ice as freezing winds whipped through valleys and over hills. Ironically, the troops who endured the coldest West Virginia conditions during the WVMA winter were deployed to the Pacific Theater.

One tragic exercise occurred in March 1944 when a soldier crossing the Blackwater River near Davis, WV, became overwhelmed in swift water. An officer attempted to



Prior to assaulting the cliffs, soldiers practiced climbing and rappelling off wooden climbing towers nicknamed "corn cribs." PHOTO COURTESY ROBERT C. WHETSELL / NORM LINDHJEM

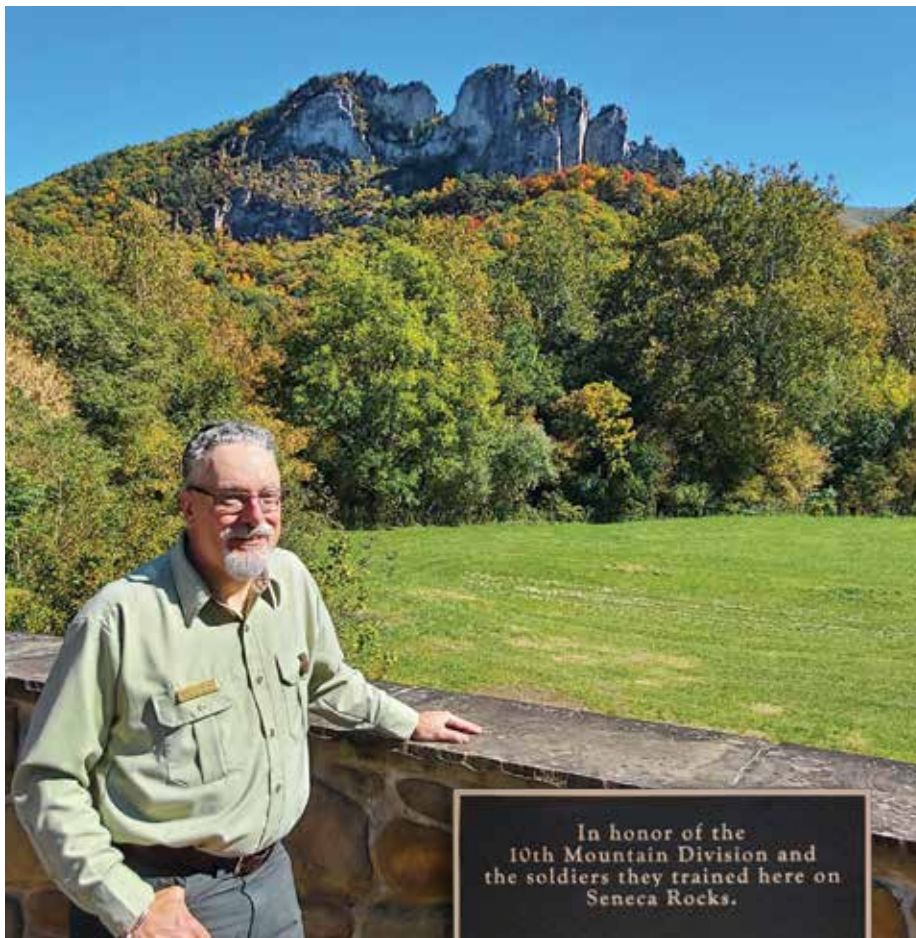
rescue the soldier, but raging waters swept him into the current. Farther downstream, a third soldier also attempted to assist and was lost. In total, all three men from the 35th Infantry Division lost their lives in the unfortunate incident. For their valiant effort to save their comrade, each man received a rare posthumous Purple Heart medal from the Army, the only known medals to be awarded to soldiers during the West Virginia Maneuvers.

The WVMA once again answered the call when wartime conditions in Italy highlighted the need for pack mules. It was observed that rugged terrain hampered mechanized units and the transportation of heavy artillery. The Army found that mortars, transported by pack mules, was more effective in supporting troops, rather than attempting to move heavy artillery. The Army responded by transferring a Quartermaster Pack Company from Colorado to Elkins. Using the Seneca Rocks format, instruction was provided in animal management to teams camped near Gladwin, WV.

Two hundred and ninety-two animals were drafted into the packers' school.

In the fall of 1943, one of the most unusual programs of the WVMA set up shop at the base of Seneca Rocks, in close proximity to the climbers. Messenger pigeons were transported to the site where instructors implemented a new element to the program. Birds have a history of military service in different wars, and were thought to be of possible use in the current conflict. Problems quickly arose however because the wooden carriers strapped on climbers' backs added weight, caused balance problems, and rubbed skin raw.

As planned, two pigeons were outfitted with plastic tubes containing the same written message. The duo was intended to improve the odds of getting a message through to the receiver. The birds also provided an immediate life line for the novice climbers because there was no other way to communicate with the base camp in the event of an accident. Unfortunately, West Virginia hawks intervened



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and became unwelcome predators. The few pigeons remaining today around Seneca Rocks may have descended from the military program.

One Elkins resident grew up with the maneuver area stories and became intrigued by them. Robert “Rob” C. Whetsell, currently working with the Monongahela National Forest as North Zone Archeologist, encountered stories early in his career as a forest historian. By that time some of the tales had achieved folklore status, including ones about soldiers falling into rattlesnake dens—something that was never verified. After reading a few articles and locating photographs of assault climbers taken by *Baltimore Sun* photographer, Aubrey Bodine, Rob decided to pursue the WVMA story in a more formal way. “In particular, I wondered how many of the instructors and the men they trained were still around. So I reached out to reunion groups to put the word out. Fortunately, some instructors and former WVMA soldiers contacted me. I later made visits to the Pacific Northwest to interview a few surviving MTG instructors from the climbing program—all have since passed.”

Left: Rob Whetsell, Monongahela National Forest employee and Elkins, WV, resident, researched the history of the WVMA and the Army’s climbing school at Seneca Rocks in 1943-1944. He has since published articles on the Maneuvers and produced a 15-minute interpretive film about the climbing program that can be viewed at the Seneca Rocks Discovery Center.

PHOTO COURTESY DAN WHETZEL

Inset: 10th Mountain Division historical marker located at U.S. Forest Service’s Seneca Rocks Discovery Center.

Below: President Truman presents the Medal of Honor to Pfc. Desmond T. Doss for his bravery at the Battle of Okinawa. Desmond was portrayed in the 2016 movie “Hacksaw Ridge.”



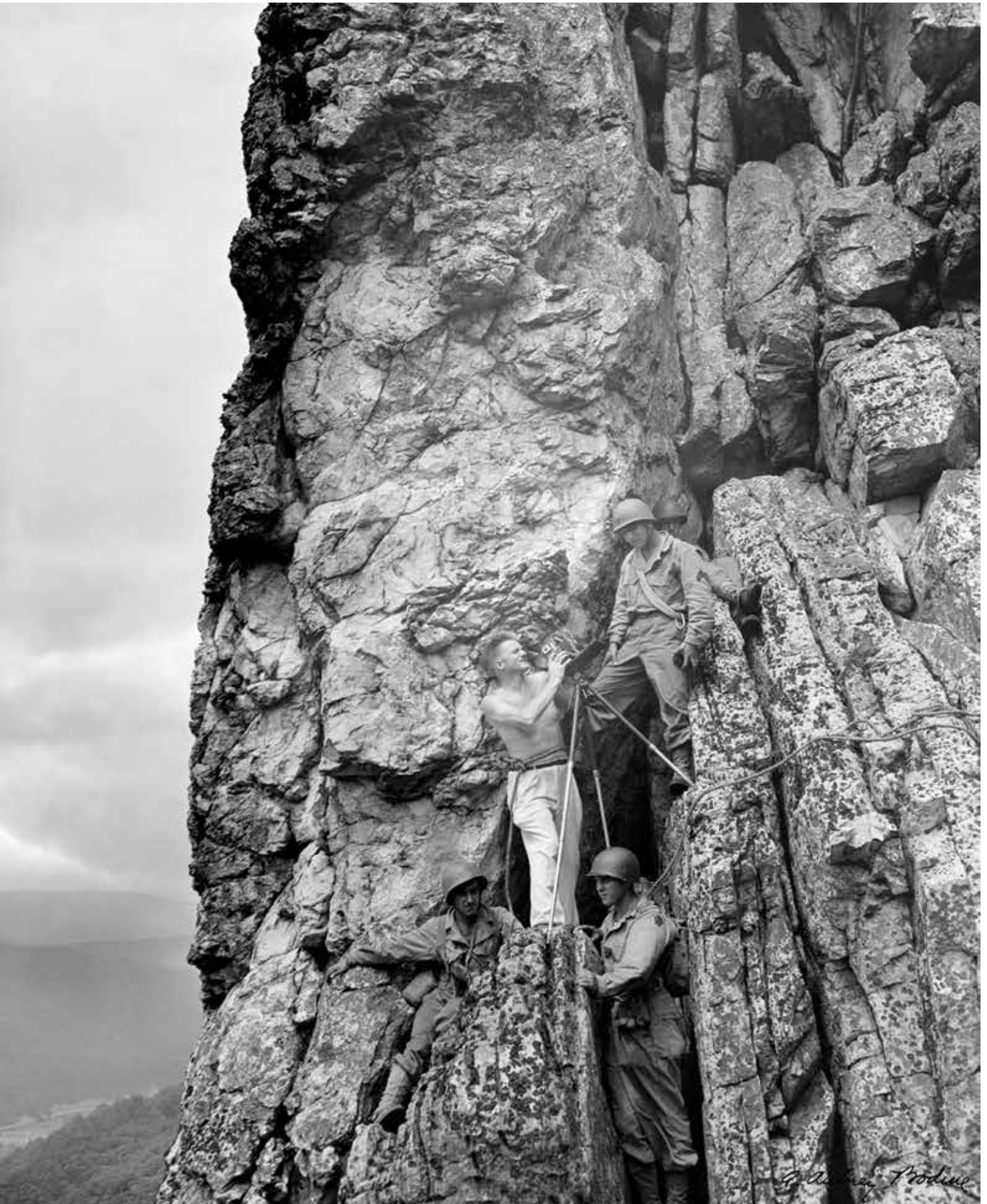
Rob published a magazine article, followed by a 15 minute video production, which not only captured stories of the school, but also brought recognition

to the Seneca Rocks climbers. The video is shown to visitors at the Seneca Rocks Discovery Center.

A recent major film also helped draw attention to the dangers of assault climbing in warfare. The 2016 movie, “Hacksaw Ridge,” told the story of Pfc. Desmond T. Doss, a conscientious objector during World War II who was awarded the Medal of Honor for bravery at the Battle of Okinawa. Rob notes that Pfc. Doss’ skills were acquired through training at the WVMA. According to Rob, “Pfc. Desmond Doss, a medic of the 77th Infantry Division’s 307th Infantry Regiment, received assault climbing training

Facing page: *Baltimore Sun* photographer A. Aubrey Bodine (light pants), goes “above and beyond” to capture the intensive assault training of these soldiers from the 28th Infantry Division during the summer of 1943. Imagine how difficult to haul the heavy camera and tripod to record these photos for historic preservation.

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Alfred P. Rodwell

during the maneuvers. In May 1945, despite his own wounds while under enemy fire during the Battle of Okinawa, Doss used his knot tying and evacuation skills learned during the maneuvers, to save 75 wounded soldiers, lowering them to safety on a rope from an escarpment known as Hacksaw Ridge. For his actions in Okinawa, Doss was awarded the Medal of Honor.”

More than 100,000 soldiers trained in the WVMA until July 1944 when it abruptly closed following the Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944. Those who served at WVMA were deployed to all theaters of operation. While most physical reminders of the facilities have been erased, some artifacts are ever present such as at the former Dolly Sods firing range. During the war the open land served for munitions firing training, including howitzer rounds and mortars. Despite ordnance clearance efforts by the military, visitors to the environmentally unique area are advised to be wary of unexploded ordnance left from the wartime maneuvers.

Visitors to Seneca Rocks have plenty of options for sight-seeing and learning experiences. The Sites Homestead and Heritage Garden, adjacent to the Discovery Center, is a restored mid 19th century structure that hosts a variety of events throughout the year. The Seneca Rocks Discovery

Center (304-567-2827) not only serves as a comprehensive visitor center, but also hosts training sessions and special events. Artifacts from the climbing school, environmental exhibits, and geographic displays are offered for viewing during the April to October operating season.

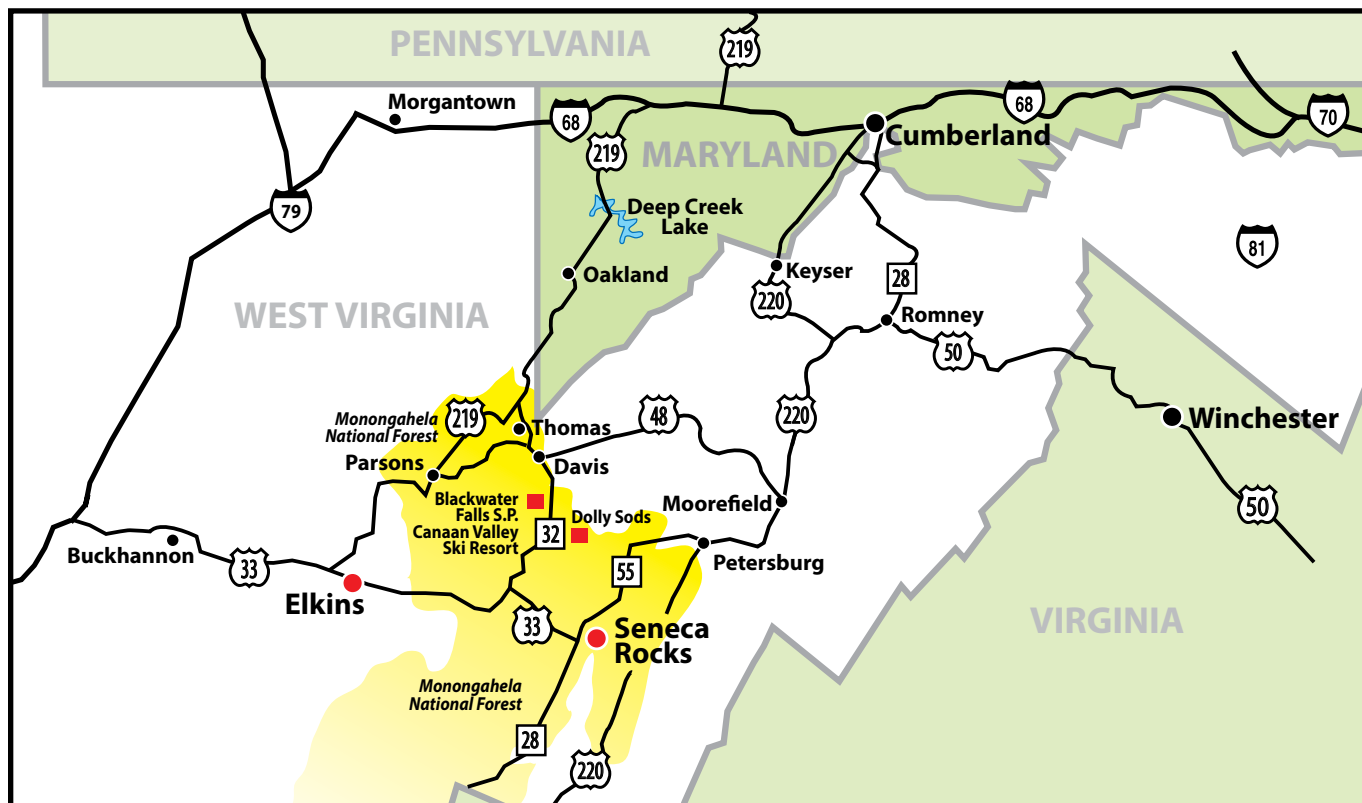
Mountain Discoveries acknowledges Robert C. Whetsell's invaluable assistance in preparing this article.

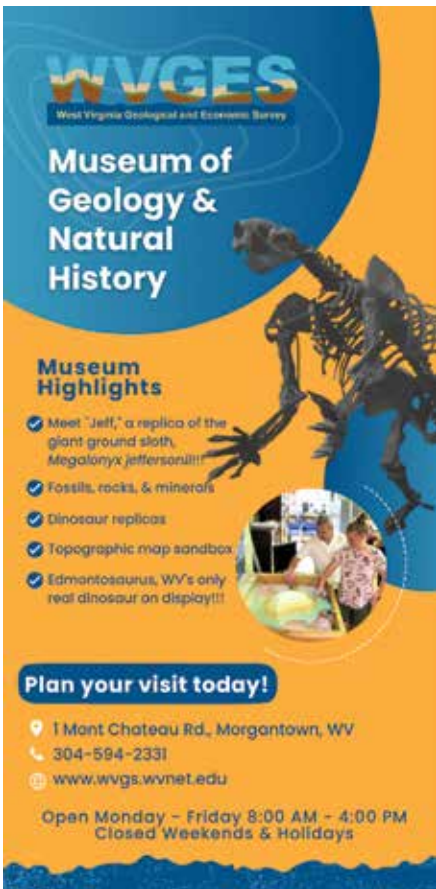
Also acknowledged is Donald L. Rice and Army History magazine.



The Sites Homestead and Heritage Garden is located adjacent to the Discovery Center at Seneca Rocks.

PHOTO COURTESY DAN WHETZEL





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A Special Addition to the

THRASHER CARRIAGE MUSEUM

Written by: **Shelby Calhoun**



PHOTO BY LANCE C. BELL

THE PHAETON CARRIAGE – FAST AND FURIOUS, BUT ELEGANT

The Thrasher Carriage collection is a rare and extensive collection of horse-drawn vehicles dating to the late 1800s and early 1900s. The collection is unsurpassed in its breadth and depth and includes everything from milkman carts to luxurious sleighs used by the Vanderbilt family, funeral hearses, and President Teddy Roosevelt's inauguration coach. Accessories such as hitches, saddles, bearskin lap robes, charcoal foot warmers, lanterns, and more, offer a glimpse into America's transportation lifestyle before the advent of the automobile.

Jim Steele has been the manager of Shamrock Farm in Woodbine, Maryland, for 45 years. As an amateur carriage driver, Jim frequently attends the carriage auctions held by Martin Auctioneers, Inc. in New Holland, Pennsylvania. Over time, Jim has purchased several items for use by his family, a wagonette to give rides around their farm and a high gig for his limited combined driving events. Jim's attendance at the auctions enables him to keep an eye out for his favorite vehicle, an Irish Jaunting Cart, while

looking for other special carriages. At the fall 2019 sale, Jim came across a spectacular Phaeton. Jim noted, "I was impressed with the meticulous restoration and paint job, and because the price was right, I purchased it. To my dismay, the history on the vehicle was unavailable, except that it came from an anonymous estate, and that it had been professionally restored to its original condition."

After transporting the Phaeton back to the farm, and consulting with his wife, Christie, they decided that the Phaeton was just too special to be used on the farm and should be showcased in a museum. Having visited the Thrasher Carriage Museum in Frostburg, Maryland, many times while two of their sons attended Frostburg State University, the Steeles decided to donate the Phaeton to the museum in the name of their two FSU graduates, Christopher and Timothy.

Jim mentions, "I remember being so impressed with Gary Bartik and the quality of the exhibits of historic carriages

at the Thrasher. We are happy that many more people will be able to enjoy the Phaeton.”

Phaeton carriages were sporty with four large wheels and a collapsible top. The seat was quite high and sometimes required a ladder to access. Phaetons were fast, but had a high center of gravity leaving them vulnerable to tipping. The sides were open and that exposed a gentleman's trousers or a lady's skirt to flying mud.

With open seating, the Phaeton was both fast and dangerous, giving meaning to its name, drawn from the mythical Phaethon, son of Helios, who nearly set the Earth on fire while attempting to drive the chariot of the Sun.

A Spider Phaeton, of American origin and made for gentlemen drivers, was a high and lightly constructed carriage with a covered seat in front, and a footman's seat behind. The term footman originally applied to servants who ran in front or alongside their masters who were on horseback—servants who were literally on foot. But by the end of the eighteenth century, coaches and carriages could travel faster because roads had greatly improved, making a seat for the servant tending the carriage necessary.

At the end of the nineteenth century, an affluent Victorian lady took a great interest in the appointments and accessories of her horse carriage. Horse carriage manufacturers catered to this attention by providing a variety of linings and extravagant fittings to help the society woman through her day of calling, shopping, and other engagements. Horse carriages used for every day purposes were generally lined with a dark color. Some women carried out the color of their livery and carriages in the lining. For instance, if the livery was dark blue with light trimmings, the carriage-linings were of dark blue. Red was not used very often in the late nineteenth century. Leather, cloth, felt, and sometimes corduroy were used — of course, of the best quality. Many of the smaller horse carriages were designed in light



PHOTO BY
MIKE CALHOUN

cloths because fashion dictated that light gowns with the light cloths looked particularly well.

The Phaeton donated by the Steele's was manufactured by Joubert & White of Glens Falls, N.Y. The deluxe Phaeton interior features Bradford Broadcloth upholstery of light slate. The body and carriage parts are painted hunter green with yellow ochre striping, and the 'bonnet' is of black leather. The Phaeton also features a footman's seat.

The Thrasher Carriage Museum is located at the terminus of the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad and is a stopping place on the Great Allegheny Passage.

Thrasher Carriage Museum
19 Depot St., Frostburg, MD 21532
Call for hours or special appointments – 301-777-7200
Alleganymuseummd.org/thrasher-carriage-collection

WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

Pottery Trail

Written by: **Sara Mullins**

Potter Kirke Martin of M4 Studios

© Visit Hagerstown Washington County, MD, 2022

The art form known as pottery is one of the oldest human inventions, intimately connected with nature and food. Sometime before the Neolithic period, humans figured out how to transform a type of natural soil material we know as clay into useful objects. When wet, clay becomes malleable and can be shaped as desired, and then fired at a high temperature to harden. Pottery can take many forms, ranging from rustic earthenware to stoneware to ceramics to fine porcelain. This ancient art form's enduring popularity can

be attributed to its versatility in form, function and beauty. Potters love making it and people love using it.

One such potter is Kirke Martin, a Tennessee native who settled in Washington County around 20 years ago, attracted by the area's rich agricultural history and cultural vitality. About a year ago, he noticed that several theme-based tourism projects—the Valley Craft Studio Tour, Ice Cream Trail, and Grapes and Grains Trail—had taken off in Washington County. He knew a lot of potters and creative



Pottery Trail potters (l to r): Denise Joyal, Kilnjoy Ceramics; Pamela Hall, Twin Moons Pottery; Bill van Gilder, van Gilder Pottery; Alison Severance, Highfield Pottery; Dirk Martin, Foxcross Pottery; Kirke Martin, M4 Studios; and Mark Poole, Orchard View Pottery. Not pictured: Tameria Martinez, Clay; Stephen Wright, Wright Hand Studio; and Hunt Prothro.

Mark Poole's Orchard View Pottery studio, atop an orchard in Smithsburg, MD.

people living in the area, many of whom had been drawn to the area for the same reasons as he had. He also took note of the area's abundant and varied attractions. So he decided to propose a Pottery Trail to Visit Hagerstown, an initiative of the Hagerstown-Washington County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

"I received strong support and great momentum from the Visitors Bureau in promoting and implementing this project," Kirke said. He spread the word himself and noticed that word-of-mouth from other participants helped, too. The Pottery Trail plan evoked a positive response from local potters and the public.

The Pottery Trail, located along the South Mountain Corridor, offers visitors an opportunity to take a unique road trip. "It's the first such trail in Maryland," Kirke said. "People can visit the studios of 10 professional ceramic artists making pottery in our local area. There are a lot of artists in Washington County. The more we link up with each other and show a variety of work, the better the result for everyone. Each potter creates unique pieces, some functional and some sculptural, representing a huge range of glazes, finishes and firing processes. Each potter works

in a distinctive, individual manner, yet all 10 cooperate to make the Pottery Trail successful.

The following is a list of the 10 potters and a brief description and sampling of their work from their web sites.

#1 Foxcross Pottery,

Sharpsburg MD – In 1972, Del Martin started this studio overlooking the Potomac River and now operated by his son Dirk. Guests can enjoy a charming, rustic shopping experience and high-quality ceramic art.



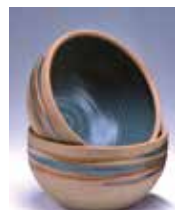
#2 M4 Studios and Gallery, Keedysville, MD – Visitors will find Kirke Martin’s Pottery, Kesra Hoffman’s Landscape Paintings and woodworking by Alan Clingan. The outdoor studio offers a roadside shopping experience, open daily from dawn to dusk. Kirke offers a range of functional and sculptural wood-fired ceramics.



#3 Hunt Prothro, Rohrersville, MD – Hunt displays his ceramic art in a modernist gallery within his 19th century farmhouse and works in an adjacent studio. He has taught at Sidwell Friends School and has work on display at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.



#4 van Gilder Pottery, Gapland, MD – This gallery is located in a restored barn atop South Mountain, adjacent to the Appalachian Trail. Featured work includes pottery and contemporary crafts – handmade stoneware, fine jewelry, woodenwares, glass and more.



#5 Tameria Martinez Clay, Boonsboro, MD – Tameria works in her clay studio and fires her wood-fueled train kiln. Her work includes porcelain and stoneware vessels, both functional and decorative, thrown on the potter’s wheel. Exploration of crystallization, ash and fluid glazes are her focus for decorative expression.



#6 Kiljoy Ceramics, Smithsburg, MD – Denise Joyal offers decorative and functional art for the table and for life. She is the Adjunct Professor of Ceramics at Wilson College with a Master of Fine Arts in Ceramic Arts and Master’s Certificate in Ceramic Arts from Hood College. She uses atmospheric firing to create surfaces displaying the intensity of sunlight and shadow.



#7 Orchard View Pottery, Smithsburg, MD – Mark Poole specializes in Raku and stoneware pottery in a studio atop a Smithsburg orchard. Raku dates back to the 1550s, begun as a low-firing process created for ceremonial tea ware used by Zen Buddhist Masters.



#8 Highfield Pottery, Cascade, MD – Allison creates wheel-thrown pottery on her old kick wheel and fires it in a wood burning kiln that she built. Her work is meant to be used. Establishing an intimate connection between her hands and the hands of the user plays a vital role in why she makes pots. She hopes her pots don't live in the cupboard.



#9 Wright Hand Studio, Hagerstown, MD – Clay artist Stephen Wright produces and sells his internationally recognized line of professional ceramic hand percussion instruments and his line of stoneware pottery. He owns and operates THE WRIGHT HAND DRUM COMPANY, where he designs his instruments and makes each one by hand, with his specially formulated and fired clay. He also teaches and performs percussion.



#10 Twin Moons Pottery, Hagerstown, MD – Pam Hall's art is created in porcelain and stoneware clay. She does art pottery and functional ware, all meant to be used and enjoyed. She offers studio private and group classes from May – November.



To learn more about the Pottery Tour and its artisans, go to www.visithagerstown.org



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Tracks and Yaks OUTDOOR EXCURSIONS

Written by: **Mary Reisinger**

Photography provided by: **Tracks and Yaks**
Unless otherwise noted

Adam Forshee (rhymes with “play”) was looking for a business model that would promote outdoor activities such as kayaking and biking. His parents’ experience with rail biking in New York State inspired him to add rail biking to his new venture, Tracks and Yaks, in Allegany County, Maryland.

Adam explored several sites in Pennsylvania that didn’t work out. Then he saw a picture of the GAP (Great Allegheny Passage) trail that runs along the former Western Maryland railroad tracks. He learned that the former Frostburg train station and the tracks were owned by Allegany County. Negotiations and preparation took nearly two years.

Adam and his crew built custom rail bikes with heavy duty brakes, acquired bicycles and kayaks, and created a selection of options for customers. The business has been successful from its beginning in the summer of 2021. Participants provide excellent reviews and word-of-mouth promotion of the activities they have enjoyed. It is usually necessary to make reservations in advance.

Tracks and Yaks provides the only rail biking location in Maryland. For the uninitiated, rail biking is riding on the rails in open two or four seat “rail bikes,” which are powered by foot pedals. Typically, rail biking routes are 3-4 miles long on relatively level terrain and riders pedal out and back. The section of track used by Tracks and Yaks is 10-15 miles



Top: Visitors from the Eastern Shore of Maryland get ready to leave Frostburg on their rail biking excursion to Cumberland with time to explore attractions there before their return shuttle to Frostburg.

Right: Another group has completed their rail bike excursion followed by a kayak float on the North Branch of the Potomac River before returning to Frostburg.



Above: All ages love the downhill ride on a two or four seat, foot-powered rail bike, with very little pedaling effort required.

Left: Participants can also rent adult-sized bicycles from Tracks and Yaks at their Frostburg train station location. At the end of the day, after riding the Gap Trail to Cumberland, rented bikes are picked up by Tracks and Yaks staff. *PHOTO BY MARY REISINGER*



long, depending on the end point, and all downhill. Very little pedaling effort is required, and machines sometimes referred to as speeder cars are used to pull the empty rail bikes back up the hill to the Frostburg Train Station while riders are shuttled back to the starting point or on to their next activity by bus or van.

In addition to rail biking, Tracks and Yaks activities include bicycling, kayaking, and tubing. Adam and the staff (along with Julie Forshee when she is not teaching) oversee several different recreational adventures. Currently, these are the tours available:

Helmstetter Hotshot, offered 2-3 times a day, involves rail biking for ten miles through scenic surroundings including an overlook of historic Mount Savage, going through Brush Tunnel, and returning by shuttle bus or van to Frostburg.



Rail bikes arriving in Cumberland — the *Queen City Excursion*, *Track and Yak Excursion*, and *Pedal and Paddle Excursion* stop in Cumberland before continuing their scheduled outings and return to Frostburg. PHOTO BY MIKE CALHOUN

Queen City Excursion, leaving promptly at 9:00 to be off the tracks before the Scenic Western Maryland Railroad run at 11:30, starts with a longer rail bike trip to the Cumberland's historic Western Maryland Train Station at Canal Place, time to explore the attractions there, and a pick up at 1:00 to return to Frostburg.

Bike Shuttle, for regular bicycles rather than rail bikes; participants can rent adult-sized bicycles from Tracks and Yaks or bring their own. Tracks and Yaks shuttles people from Canal Place in Cumberland uphill to the Frostburg Train station so that they ride at their own pace back to Cumberland on a downhill section of the Gap Trail. At the end of the day, rented bikes will be picked up in Cumberland by Tracks and Yaks staff.

Track and Yak, from 9:00-4:00 Thursday through Sunday, combines a rail bike excursion and kayaking on the North Branch of the Potomac River. After the 15 mile downhill rail bike trip, riders are taken by shuttle to the boat launch for the float and then returned to Frostburg.

Pedal and Paddle, a 4-6 hour adventure includes a bicycle ride downhill from Frostburg to Cumberland on the GAP Trail, time for lunch, four more miles of bicycling

on the C&O Canal path to reach the boat launch site, time on the water in kayaks, and a shuttle back to Frostburg. People who bring their own bikes will find them waiting at the station.

A new tour being planned for summer of 2023 will be a stand-alone river tubing ride on the North Branch of the Potomac in a part of the river that goes through some rugged cliffs and other scenic areas.

Safety is a priority for Tracks and Yaks. Rail bike schedules are carefully coordinated with the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad runs on the track. Flaggers check each crossing before waving rail bikes through. Safety harnesses are used to protect adults and children. Sensible limitations on weight, height, and age are set to make sure that every participant has a good experience.

Check the website to find up-to-date details and to make reservations. The season runs from May to October with the possibility of added weeks in November depending on factors such as the weather. If past seasons are any indication, trips will fill up fast.

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GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Portal to the West

Written by: **John MacGowan**

PHOTO BY LANCE C. BELL

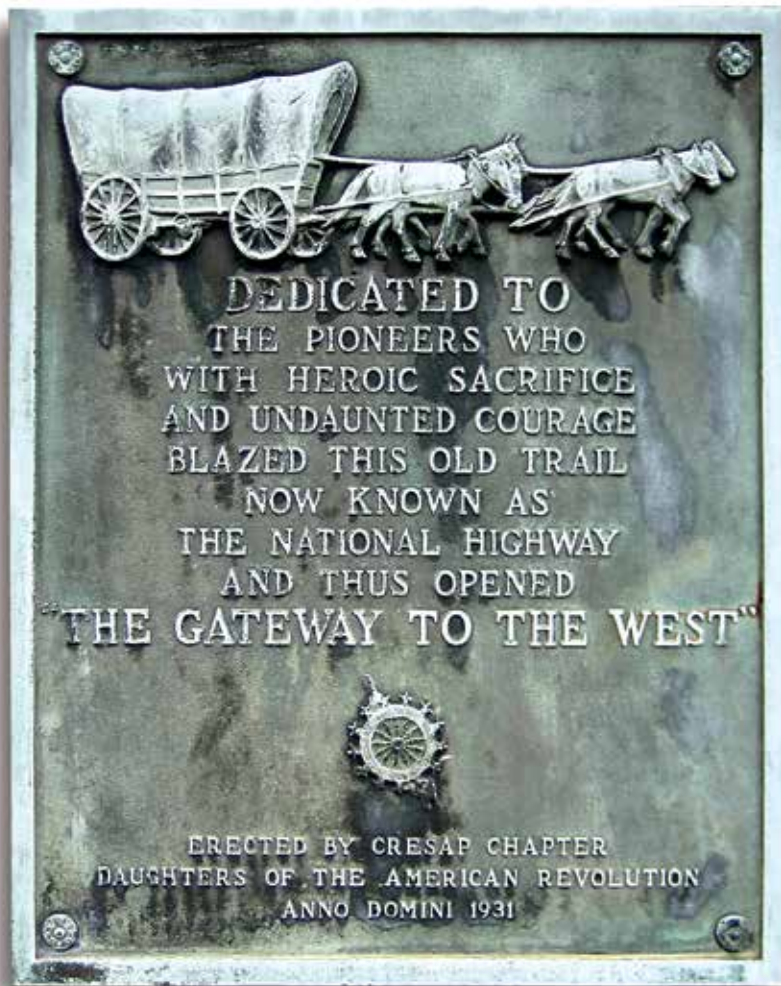
With over four million miles of roads weaving their way throughout our country, there is no end of opportunities to explore. We can enjoy the freedom to travel from city to city and state to state without hindrance. The easiest way for most of us to explore is by automobile – just hop in your car or truck and hit the road. You don't even need a map – just punch up your destination on your GPS and get step-by-step guidance to the destination of your choice.

But this has not always been the case. To better understand the importance of Garrett County, in Western Maryland to the early growth of this nation, it's important to note that there were only three main paths that provided access to the western development of the United States. (In this article we will refer to the area as Garrett County, although it did not officially become a county until 1872.) **Garrett County** with its unique geographical advantages permitted explorers, traders, and later settlers, to take advantage of the growth potential westward, and to realize the riches of the Ohio Valley territory and beyond. Two other portals existed in the eastern US; to the north was the **Kittanning Gap** through Pennsylvania, and to the south was the **Cumberland Gap** located near the point where Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee meet.



Garrett County provided the portal that connected the central mid-Atlantic region westward. Incidentally, both Cumberland, Maryland, and the Cumberland Gap were named for William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland (1721-1765), the son of King George II.

The first trails through Garrett County were blazed by Indigenous peoples seeking to summer in the fine pastures and sumptuous glades that provided fresh food for



This bronze plaque, dedicated by the Daughters of the American Revolution, is located along the National Road (US 40) at the LaVale Toll House.

themselves and their herds. After them came the hunters and traders from the east to gather pelts and other desirable goods to bring back to the colonies. This awakened easterners to the existence of more land beyond the mountains than they thought possible. Soon, military trails and crude roads were built. Then came the wagon roads. Each improvement brought more settlers and more industry and jobs. Construction of a railroad brought still more movement of people and goods through this gateway to the west. The demands for transportation continued to make Garrett County the passage that was vital to growth and sustained movement of people and goods, serving as a cost-effective connection between the Mid-Atlantic and the Midwest.

The access through Garrett County continues to enable the same three key transportation corridors still in operation today: US 40, US 50, and the CSX Railroad. Construction of each is a story of growth and ingenuity that was so important to the westward expansion of our nation.

THE NATIONAL ROAD (US 40)

Several hundred years ago, in the summertime, Indigenous peoples made a path to Garrett County to let their buffalo and other livestock graze on the tall, rich plant growth. Later, hunters and trappers began trading with the natives. In about 1750, wanting to seize on these growing trade opportunities, Christopher Gist, the well-known frontiersman, hired Thomas Cresap to work with a Delaware Indigenous chief, Nemacolin, to improve the pack mule trail between the Ohio country and Western Maryland to better the movement of trade goods to market. This trail became known as the Nemacolin Trail. Shortly after, in 1754, a young George Washington improved the trail to accommodate a force of 300 soldiers.

Two years later, General Braddock left Cumberland, MD, for what is now Pittsburgh, PA. His legions expanded the Nemacolin Trail to a 12-foot-wide crude road to march his force of about 4,200 men to a fateful battle with the French at Fort Duquesne. Braddock was severely wounded in that battle. He was carried by the retreating English army, now led by George Washington, along the same road they had come.

Along the way General Braddock succumbed to his wounds. Fearing his body would be desecrated by the pursuing French, Braddock's body was laid to rest in the middle of what would be renamed Braddock Road.

In 1806, President Thomas Jefferson authorized the improvement of Braddock Road and renamed it the Cumberland Road. This was the first federally funded road; however, a federal financial crisis in 1811 followed by the War of 1812 caused delays in the completion of the road.

Eventually, after three years of working west from Cumberland, over the Alleghenies, the construction crews arrived at Wheeling, WV. The cost was an unheard-of \$13,000 per mile (\$314,000 today). Finally, in 1818, the highway between Cumberland and Wheeling was completed. The nascent country finally had an improved highway connecting the Potomac and Ohio rivers.

In 1822, President James Monroe vetoed a bill to finance the upkeep of the road. Initially, some funding was paid by investors hoping the improved highways would raise trading profits. For a while investors placed toll gates every 20 miles to help raise funds needed for maintenance, but



they soon found that profits after expenditures did not warrant their efforts. In 1831, the federal government began transferring control of portions of the newly named National Road to the states, and by 1832 the states also began collecting tolls to fund repairs. In 1834, the National Road became the property of the states through which it passed.

For a few decades the National Road saw public and private vehicles all jostling for room on its 30-foot-wide surface. Burly teamsters guided huge wagons of goods and stagecoaches weighing a ton or more, flew by honking their horns to warn other travelers and drovers pushing pigs, sheep and cattle along the road, destined for markets. Mixed in with all of this was a continuous stream of settlers traveling steadily west in family groups or caravans of neighbors with Conestoga wagons. They were heading west to form a new nation. Today, in Maryland, this road has a length of 221 miles —



Top: Motorists travel along the National Road (US 40) at Keyzers Ridge, west, Garrett County, MD.

Above: The Casselman Inn along US 40 in Grantsville, MD. Both of these photos were taken by Garrett County photographer, Leo J. Beachy, between 1905 and 1927.

COURTESY GARRETT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

the longest numbered highway in the state. Almost half of the road overlaps or parallels with I-68 or I-70, while the old alignment is generally known as US 40 Alternate, US 40 Scenic, or Maryland Route 144. Nationally, the road now connects Atlantic City, NJ, with Silver Summit, UT, a distance of 2,200 miles.

THE NORTHWESTERN TURNPIKE

A 16-year-old George Washington explored the South Branch Valley of the Potomac River in 1748 as he looked for a way to connect a canal to the Ohio River Valley. Others were also exploring ways to make a pathway to the west. The direction of this path slices through the southwest corner of Garrett County, going northwest from a crossing of the Potomac River near Gorman, WV, and continuing about two miles west of Red House into West Virginia.

The development of US 50 follows much the same pattern as did US 40 with subtle but significant differences. As with US 40, the beginning of US 50 was a pathway for Indigenous peoples and traders, but this path took advantage of the South Branch Valley of the Potomac River. They also used this path for trading, hunting and moving herds of buffalo so they could graze in the succulent grasses of Garrett County. In 1756, Samuel McCullough, a fur trader, made a packhorse trail that connected the South Branch Valley to the Glades (later Garrett County) by way of the Potomac's North Branch.

By 1831, the economic effects of the National Road demonstrated the value of another, more southerly route. This encouraged the Virginia legislature to establish a line of credit of \$125,000 to fund the construction of a new route "from Winchester to some point on the Ohio River to be situated by the principal engineer." It was devised and commissioned as the Northwestern Turnpike. The new 12-foot-wide road was constructed through the Appalachian Divide to the Ohio Valley, passing through nearly 9 miles of what is now Garrett County. The Northwestern Turnpike work was constructed between 1832 and 1838. By then, the cost of construction had risen to \$400,000 (more than \$13.5 million today). Improvements made to



Overview of Gormania, WV (Grant County) and Gorman, MD (Garrett County) along the North Branch Potomac River, circa 1880. PHOTO COURTESY JOHN MACGOWAN

the road surface and bridges continued until 1852 accommodating stage coaches to Romney from Winchester, Moorefield and Green Spring, as it provided the access westward to Parkersburg and the Ohio River.

The Federal Goods Amendment to The Federal Highway Act of 1921 consolidated 4,600 miles of country roads, including the Northwestern Turnpike, into a state highway system. By the 1940s the turnpike was renamed the George Washington Highway and later, US Route 50 as it was merged into the federal highway system.

Today, US 50 follows the same basic route of the Northwestern Turnpike. The many communities that dot the landscape along US 50 owe their existence to the commerce brought by the old Pike. Now US 50 stretches nearly 3,100 miles from Ocean City, Maryland, to West Sacramento, California.

THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD

This third route through Garrett County made a significant shift from roads to rails. The first concept of a railroad was in 1812 and came to fruition in 1830 with the tracks laid for the nation's first railroad, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. That ribbon of steel became the first common carrier railroad in the United States. Merchants from the burgeoning port of Baltimore, which had already benefitted from the construction of the earlier National Road, wanted to grow trading operations using the new technology along

the same routes as developed by the previous trans-Appalachian settlers.

Due to conflicts with the construction of the C&O canal, the B&O was required to build their road across the Potomac River in Virginia (later West Virginia) at Harpers Ferry. The B&O re-entered Maryland in Bloomington and it reached Oakland, MD, in 1850 before continuing west.

During the Civil War, despite the peril, B&O president John Work Garrett supported the Union. The B&O became crucial to the North as the main rail connection between Washington, DC, through the Appalachian Mountains and on to the Ohio country. During the war, the B&O suffered nearly 150 raids for its role as a lifeline for the Union's efforts and became the deciding factor in many battles. John Garrett's leadership allowed the vital B&O to remain a viable company throughout the war.

Passenger train travel in the 1880s generally cost two to three cents per mile, when one dollar would be the equivalent of almost \$26 today. Nevertheless, tourism in the mountains grew rapidly as there was an awakening to a new type of leisure for those who could afford it. The B&O took advantage of this and encouraged building the Deer Park Hotel vacation resort in 1873.

As a result of that success, two years later the B&O built a second hotel, the Oakland Hotel. A short while later, a third seasonal community at Mountain Lake Park was developed as a Chautauqua for those seeking both education and entertainment. These ventures brought hundreds of vacationers every season with the B&O making as many as 12 stops every day. Summer guests took advantage of swift and comfortable transportation provided by the trains from major cities such as Washington, Philadelphia, Richmond, and even cities to the west, such as Cincinnati – all to escape the city heat and relax in cool comfort for the summer.

Each of these three transportation developments, US 40, US 50 and the B&O spurred the growth of a nation as it provided access from the east coast to the Ohio Valley and beyond. But all of this would not have been possible if it were not for the portal that allowed access by a growing United States through the mountains of Maryland.



Top to bottom: The B&O was required to build their railroad across the Potomac River at Harpers Ferry, WV, due to conflicts with construction of the C&O Canal. PHOTO COURTESY JOHN MACGOWAN

The B&O Railroad Station at Mountain Lake Park, near Oakland, MD, circa 1900. The station is still in existence and has been home to many businesses over the years.

PHOTO COURTESY JOHN MACGOWAN

Chautauqua, an educational and entertainment event, brought hundreds of guests by train to the community of Mountain Lake Park, MD, each year.

LEO J. BEACHY PHOTO, COURTESY GARRETT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Paving the Way....



Families traveling along the National Road near Grantsville, Maryland.

LEO J. BEACHY PHOTO, COURTESY GARRETT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Travel and roads became so important to the development of America that constant building, improvements and repairs were necessary. In Scotland, amateur engineer John Loudon McAdam was developing the first innovation in paving since Roman times. This construction method became known as “macadamisation” or, more simply, “macadam.”

McAdam’s road cross section was composed of a compacted subgrade of crushed granite or greenstone designed to support the load, covered by a surface of light stone to absorb wear and tear and a cambered layer (making the road slightly convex) which caused rainwater to rapidly drain off the road rather than penetrate and damage the road’s foundations.

The first stretch of the National Road was finished before McAdam’s paving method crossed the Atlantic, but eastern reconstruction from the 1820s forward relied on McAdam’s system.

The first macadam surface in the United States was laid on the “Boonsborough Turnpike Road” between Hagerstown and Boonsboro, Maryland. By 1822, this section was the last unimproved gap in the great road leading from Baltimore on the Chesapeake Bay to Wheeling on the Ohio River.

In 1830, the 73-mile National Pike (or Cumberland Road) became the second American road to be built on the “McAdam principle.”

With the advent of motor vehicles, dust became a serious problem on macadam roads. The area of low air pressure created under fast-moving vehicles sucked dust from the road surface, creating dust clouds and a gradual unraveling of the road material. This problem was approached by spraying tar on the surface to create tar-bound macadam. Macadam roads were the forerunners of the bitumen-based binding that was to become tarmac and the word tarmac was shortened to the now familiar tarmac.

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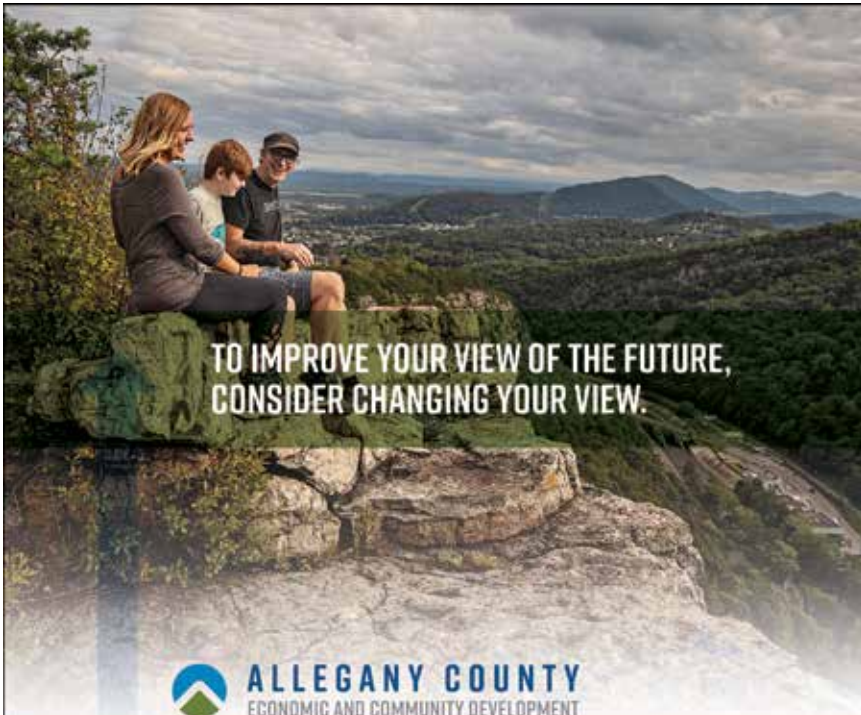
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