



For 50 Years of Community Service
Mrs. Nancy B. Martin Shows Congratulatory Messages

Honors for Nancy Martin Plentiful, Well Deserved

By Connie Shearer

Mrs. Nancy B. Martin retired as postmaster at Belle, but retirement hasn't stopped the citizens of that community from paying homage to her.

Her friends gathered to hold an appreciation day dinner for her. She received a proclamation from Belle mayor, Rudy Seacrist; an honorary membership in the Morris Harvey Alumni Assn.; a Boy Scout award; a certificate of recognition from the Post Office Department; and was commissioned a Kentucky Colonel.

What would a woman have to accomplish to be so honored? Mrs. Martin, whose husband, Harry F., an employe of DuPont, died in 1943, was married in Cedar Grove and moved to Belle in 1921. She began her postal career as a clerk for her father, postmaster, James W. Penix.

AFTER HER father's death, she assisted her brother, postmaster, Benjamin. After his death in 1936 she was confirmed postmaster, and held the position until her retirement in December 1966.

Her civic activities seemingly had no beginning and no end. She is just a person who gets involved in everything. Approximately 50 years ago she fought for street and sewer improvements and they were made available through the WPA, the PWA and Nancy B. Martin.

About the same time she helped organize and is a charter member of the Belle Presbyterian Church.

MRS. MARTIN helped organize the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts in Upper Kanawha Valley. Her three sons, the late H. James, and Samuel N. and Wayne, were scouts, and the two older boys became Eagle Scouts.

As though it weren't enough, Mrs. Martin then organized a Girl Scout Troop and her daughter Dorothy, now Mrs. Emery Woodall, was a Girl Scout and later a troop leader.

Mrs. Martin played another very important role in her daughter's life. It was through her mother, that Dorothy met her husband, who just happens to be postmaster at Hamlin.

THERE ARE numerous stories to be told about Mrs. Martin. A favorite tale of her son, Wayne (Mickie) is of his mother's effort to get city delivery in Belle. After a dozen or so trips to Washington, D.C. she finally succeeded in getting the only city mail service in an unincorporated town in the United States. He's not certain if she succeeded because of her perseverance or if the postal authorities just gave in.

Mrs. Martin helped a young man from Belle attain an appointment to the Naval Academy. Another very young man came to her years ago and expressed a desire to be a Boy Scout. Mrs. Martin saw that his dream became a reality. That same young man is a Boy Scout executive in the Blue Grass Region, Lexington, Ky., today.

Mrs. Martin is a member of the Order of Eastern Star, having helped develop three Rainbow Girl assemblies, a charter member of the Belle Woman's Club and Belle Rural Club.

Organization of First Bank

An effort for obtaining a National Bank Charter and the organization of a bank for the town of Belle, was led by William H. Moore. Assisting him were William T. Brotherton, J. R. Herald, Dr. James H. Gray, V. Francis Luikhart, Dr. James H. Thornbury, Basil Monk, and Charles F. Dodrill. These men were also chosen to serve on the Board of Directors, with V. Francis Luikhart as chairman. Elected as president was William H. Moore, Charles F. Dodrill, Executive Vice President and Cashier and Mr. J. R. Herald, Vice President.

The First National Bank of Belle was chartered and opened for business, September 3, 1964, with initially 224 shareholders and a capital of \$100,000.00. The original building was a brick structure consisting of 2,000 square feet, located at the corner of Fourth Street and Dupont Avenue. As early as 1970 it was evident that expansion of the facility was in order, so work began on July 3, 1970 to enlarge and modernize the bank. It was completed by November of that year. During this construction period the management staff successfully converted the bookkeeping procedure to data processing, as well as, replacing several pieces of the original equipment.

In June 1972, construction of a branch bank was started directly across the Kanawha River at Chesapeake, West Virginia. By October 23, 1972, the opening of this facility introduced a new challenge for the bank. The entire area on the south bank of the Kanawha River from the eastern city limits of Charleston to the Montgomery area did not have easy access to banking facilities.

Improved Drive-In facilities have been added to the main Banking House in Belle, with two drive-in-lanes being available at both banks. The present facilities appear to be adequate for the needs of both growing banks, but future expansion can be done if the need arises.

Present Officers-1975

William H. Moore President
Clayton Harper Ass't. Vice President & Cashier
J. R. Herald Vice President
Clayton Harper Cashier

Directors:

William H. Moore President
V. Francis Luikart President-Belle Hardware Co.
Chairman of the Board

Dr. James H. Gray Physician
Dr. James H. Thornbury Physician
Sam Farha Manager-Cedar Grove Furniture Co.
J. B. Monk President-Belle Lumber Co.
J. H. Herald Retired-E. I. DuPont deNemours & Co.
W. T. Brotherton, Jr. Attorney-Amos & Brotherton
Gary D. Smith Vice President-Smith & Jones Mobile Homes
Jasper LaBarbara Owner-Marmet Pharmacy
B. L. Coffindaffer Pres. Craigsville Dist. Co.



The First National Bank of Belle and Branch Office in Chesapeake



Civic Organizations

- Belle Extension Club
- Belle Lions Club
- Belle Woman's Club
- Belle Degree of Honor No. 93
- Belle View Garden Club
- Belle Garden Club
- Belle Assembly No. 7 Order of Rainbow Girls
- Belle Firemen's Auxiliary
- Belle Fire Department
- Belle Ambulance Service
- Energetic Grandmothers Club
- Childcraft Mothers Club
- American Legion Post No. 95
- American Legion Auxiliary
- Catholic Woman's Club, St. John's Parish

Clubs and Civic Organizations

Belle has a busy civic club life and typical of these organizations is the Lion's Club. This club was formed in 1944 with Mr. R. C. Mitchell as the first president.

The main goal for all Lion's clubs is sight conservation and the Belle Lion's Club has been responsible for many school children in the area to receive eye examinations and eye glasses as needed. The club has also been responsible for providing a seeing-eye dog for a blind resident, restoration by surgery for an elderly lady, conducting numerous free Glaucoma Clinics for the public, plus many other tasks in sight conservation.

The Lion's were responsible for installing the first street markers and redesignation of street names in the Belle Postal Mailing Area, as well as, publishing the first and only community directory. Even though the club is not a large one, it served as the host club for the State Lion's Clubs Convention in 1969 in Charleston, West Virginia.

The club meets on the first and third Monday of each month. Their present officers are:

President	C. W. Lambert
First Vice President	Carl Harrison
Second Vice President	Richard Fidler
Third Vice President	Gary B. Smith
Secretary-treasurer	C. U. Karnes
Membership	Thirty

LIONS FEED TEAM



Here is a picture of some members of the du Pont high school football team as they were treated to a supper by the Belle Lions Club. A large portion of the Club is made up of Belle Workers and many of the fathers of the boys were here.

Home Demonstration Club

On December 15, 1930, a group of women of Belle met in the dining room of the Presbyterian Church and formed the Rural Club. Officers elected at that time were: President, Mrs. H. F. Martin; Vice President, Mrs. A. G. Lambert; Secretary, Mrs. C. S. Bletner; Treasurer, Mrs. C. A. Williams. Other charter members were: Mrs. W. B. Pettit, Mrs. D. M. Jarrett, Mrs. F. N. Neat, Mrs. J. R. Simms, Mrs. J. H. Fulner, Mrs. H. A. Miley, Mrs. S. F. Retterer, Mrs. Clarence Herndon, Mrs. William Mays, Mrs. A. Hummell, Mrs. B. C. Miller, Mrs. Charles Dievel and Mrs. E. Reber.

The club is an affiliate of the Kanawha Farm Women's Council and the Extension Division of West Virginia University. Through the Extension Division, members are provided with lessons in all phases of homemaking: cooking, meal planning, sewing, interior decoration, citizenship, family relations, recreation, landscaping and gardening.

A Home Demonstration Agent is provided for the County to work with the members of all the Farm Women's Clubs. The club also takes its place in community affairs. It contributes to school and community projects, and is always ready to lend a helping hand to make its community a more progressive and worthwhile place to live.

Officers presently serving are:

President	Mrs. George McCue
Vice President	Mrs. Charles Gardner
Secretary	Mrs. Mona Cavendish
Treasurer	Mrs. Eva Jarrett

This club is now known as The Belle Extension and has a membership of twenty women.

Belle Fire Department

In 1943, a group of citizens in the town of Belle, were very concerned about the hazards of fire and the town's lack of fire protection, decided to organize a volunteer fire department. It was organized under the Civil Defense and was a follow-up of the World War II air raid defense program. Attending this first meeting were Robert Durbin, Dayle Fidler, Lanty Givens, Orville Hailey, Roy Price, Claude W. (Pat) Sigman, John Sims, Archie Snedegar and Clayton Williams. Pat Sigman was chosen as the fire chief.

These original volunteers were trained in first-aid, air-raid warning and fire fighting, at a training area located in the Belle Elementary School's basement, where a dark area was available for air-raid training. The volunteers, after completing the training were awarded certificates in first-aid and fire fighting, and arm bands, as well as identification cards to identify the air-raid wardens.

The first fire fighting equipment consisted of a Tanker, donated by the DuPont Company and an old Army Trailer mounted pumper that was donated by the United States Government's Civil Defense Program. The equipment was maintained by Fire Chief Sigman, donating gasoline, time and workmanship to keep it in good running condition, with the aid of the American Legion, Post No. 95, and door to door solicitation throughout the community. There were no set fees. The equipment was stored in an old building located on 11th Street.

By May 1946, the Belle Volunteer Fire Department received a charter and Harry Beam Jr., was chartered as Fire Chief. During the interim years, the fire department continued to grow with more equipment added and an increase in membership. Expansion was escalated under the dedicated leadership of Wilson Hunt, who served as the Fire Chief for twenty-one years.

In 1974, the Fire Department expanded to include an Ambulance Service, with volunteers on duty and on call twenty four hours a day. The department today has one of the best equipped fire protection for its citizens in the state, for a town of its size. Located at strategic sites, they now have three fire stations, four pumpers, one tank wagon, two utility trucks, one Amphibious Duk, used for river rescue and boat fires, one station wagon, used as a command car, two boats, three ambulances, scuba equipment, portapower and saws. The main fire station is located on Dupont Avenue in the large up to date brick building, centrally located in the middle of the town. Each Thursday evening a fire drill is held for all the members of the department.

A twenty-year member, Jack Sigman is the Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chiefs: Sam Hastings and Joe Gaylor; Captains: C. W. Sigman and Terry Tinsley. Secretary: Eugene Brown; Treasurer, David Nelson; Medical Doctor: James H. Thornbury; Chaplain: Pastor William Millar. With an active membership of forty-one men, who are on call day and night, we the citizens of Belle and our adjoining communities, can have the sense of security that day or night our lives, our homes and our possessions are so well protected from destruction of fire by the volunteer members of the Belle Fire Department. Truly this is the biggest asset for all the town's citizens. The annual dues are \$12.00.

Active Members-1976

John Johnson	John Sizemore	Donald Fields
David Kauff	David Fletcher	Wayne Turner
John Dye	Frank Coulter	H. J. Nelson
Basil Jones	Bill Recco	John Gyax
Walter Cline	Roy Price	Mike Coffey
W. D. Lipscomb Sr.	Dale Keiffer	Noel Holt
W. D. Lipscomb, Jr.	Charles Harsh	Bill Whiting
Tracy Grounds	Jim Kuhn	Denver Stricker
Chuck Harrah	Victor Ashley	



Belle Volunteer Ambulance Service

As of July 31, 1974, Fidler & Frame Funeral Home discontinued emergency ambulance service.

Richard Fidler donated a 1970 Chevrolet ambulance to the fire department and Belle Volunteer Ambulance Service went into operation on August 1, 1974. The service was operated by members of the Fire Department and a few of the members of the town, who keep a twenty-four hour watch for the town. By September, 1974, we had enough volunteers to keep the service operating without the firemen pulling the entire load.

A Board of Directors was elected on September 10, 1974. They are as follows: Chairman, Bill Whiting; Secretary-Treasurer, June Turner; Board Members: Bea Whiting, Bill Recco, Terry Tinsley, Herb Smith and David King.

According to state law by January 1, 1975, anyone riding in the back of an ambulance with a patient had to be trained in life saving technics. A class was given at the Belle Fire House and 35 people enrolled. Training also came from Lillian and Gerry Morris of Emergency Medical Services at the Charleston General Hospital. Instructors at Belle were Dr. Thornbury and Vic Ashley. The 35 people were certified by the West Virginia Department of Health as Emergency Medical Technicians. There are now 40 E.M.Ts.

Another ambulance was purchased in October, 1974 with money donated from the people of the area (\$2400.00). This now made two ambulances on duty. An additional ambulance was purchased in July, 1975 by the Service.

In September, 1975 elections were held for the Board of Directors and the results were:

Chairman of the Board	Bill Whitting
Secretary-treasurer	June Turner
Board Members Terry Tinsley, David King, David Nelson, Virginia Lambert, Eloise Nelson, Bea Whiting	

The Ambulance Service is now in its 15th month of operation and has averaged a little over one call per day, (469 calls in 434 days).

The American Legion Belle Post 95

The principal office or place of business of the corporation will be located in the village of Belle in the county of Kanawha and the state of West Virginia. The objects for which the corporation was formed were as follows: To constitute, maintain, operate and conduct in the village of Belle and throughout the county and the state, a patriotic, civic, social, fraternal, literary, educational, charitable and benevolent organization. Known as Post No. 95, Inc., under a charter

ordered by the American Legion, a national corporation created by an act of Congress of the United States, on September 16, 1919.

On November 9, 1932, the Belle Post No. 95 American Legion was chartered with sixteen members present, by National Commander Louis Johnson. The first meeting was conducted at the Brown's home, located at the western section of the town, now the site of the DuPont Plant. The first officers elected were: Jack Wilson, Commander; S. F. Retters, Adjutant; R. B. Durbin, Finance Officer; E. Douglass, Service Officer; Granville Buckley; Chaplain, B. A. Dooley; Sargent at Arms, Committee Men: J. R. Sims, Guy D. Huff, K. G. Long and W. E. Williams.

The Post met in various buildings and locations before a permanent location was available. In 1944 they purchased the Community Building, which they shared and rented to most of the civic organizations of the area, for fund-raising projects, political rallies, voting places and social functions. Many outstanding civic projects were the work of this fine group of men. In October 1941 the Marmet Hospital Foundation for Crippled Children was organized by the Post; raised enough money to purchase the American Flag at the Belle Elementary and the Marmet Hospital; sponsored American Legion Baseball team, which won the state championship in 1943. One of the most rewarding projects and the biggest asset to the town the Post was responsible for organizing the Volunteer Fire Department. Through the efforts of Lanty Givens, employee of the West Virginia Water Company, they were able to purchase the first fire fighting equipment. At their meeting in May 1946, it was reported by J. R. Sims that the fire department was formed.

During the closing years of World War II there were one hundred and one veterans in the Post—1944. Today only fourteen members are on the roll. In August 1975, the Belle Post No. 95 agreed to sell their property to the Town of Belle. Appraised at \$30,000.00 for the entire holdings, the Post let the town government purchase at the cost of \$15,000.00. Today the hall has been torn down to make room for a new and larger recreational center for the town's residents.



American Legion Post No. 95 Building (No longer standing). This building was formerly a garage and gas station, owned and operated by C. S. Thompson and his brother Ira (Dusty) during the early 1930s.

Dr. W. B. Robertson
R. L. Hansford
C. H. Gregory
G. R. Harris
C. R. Francis
E. O. Morris
J. S. Harmon
J. J. Faulks

Willard Ashley
Wallace Cundiff
Wilbur Dowell
Joe Efav
C. H. Gregory
Dewey Raines
D. D. Showen

Charter Members

D. H. Moss
R. B. Durbin
L. O. Kincaid
B. C. Miller
H. T. Hunter
Thomas M. Holmes
B. L. Wheeler
Youell Nelson

Today 1976 Members

C. J. Clark
Edward W. Day
J. J. Douglas
(deceased, May 1976)
C. R. Frances
Kenna G. Long
W. E. Williams

Clayton Williams



Organizers of the Marmet Hospital Foundation for Crippled Children. Front row seated (left to right), Mr. Lacy, Burl Miller, Harry Beam, Jr., Stanley Pascavis. Second row seated: Lon Dillion, Ernest Parry, Jim Chaplain, Lanty Givens, R. Dayle Fidler, Robert Durbin. Back Row: Clayton Williams, K. O. Mullins, Doctor Henson and Frank Grullia.

History of Organization of the Belle Garden Club

The Belle Garden Club was organized December 2, 1932 by a group of women who wished to encourage those who worked with flowers toward a greater interest in the beautification of the Community; to meet together for the discussion of their common problems and to provide the cooperation necessary for the exhibiting of the fruits of the soil, also the fellowship that comes to all those who work in God's good earth.

Mrs. Nancy B. Martin, one of the instigators in the organization of the club, served as the club's first president, she led a distinguished list of club president, totaling twenty-five in all.

The Belle-View Garden Club, the East Bank, the Belle-Letres (now disbanded), the Burning Springs were all sponsored by the Belle Club. The club has worked diligently over the past years with various Civic Projects of Beautification throughout the community. They have helped with the landscaping of seven churches, three parsonages, one manse, Belle Post Office, assisted with DuPont Junior and Senior High School and the Belle Elementary School.

In 1963 the largest of our Civic Projects began with the development of 300 feet of land adjoining new Route 60 east of Charleston and beginning at Midland Ave. in Belle. The original planting of trees, shrubs and flowers was over

\$421.74, and the continuous planting there has been amounted to well over \$4,000 with the planting each spring and summer of the Natural Stone Planter. The same year the club petitioned the Mayor and Town Council to designate the city as a bird sanctuary. It was approved and the city is now a haven for birds. A permanent redwood sign has been added here and now an additional Bicentennial planting has been started at the Witcher Bridge and the project will be continued with additional plantings. Most club members have gardens and mini-gardens and maintain individual bird feeders, with the club purchasing food each year for other bird feeders. Two new signs added this year to the Welcome to Belle signs at either end of Belle.

In the past Standard Flower Shows were held each year, successful and open as an educational asset to the public, with shows being held at least every two or three years. Three members are National Accredited Judges and one a National Flower Show School Instructor. Members continue entering shows and the club has been very proud of awards received.

For the past few years the club has been interested in environmental efforts such as anti-litter, trash cans furnished and painted, labeled by the club, the purchase of Pate books, one book per member for the placement in the schools, and the latest effort being the saving of glass by each club member for recycling.

The Club now consists of 17 active members, three associate members, three honorary, and one special honorary member. Two members belong to the Charleston Rose Society, one a member of the West Virginia Chrysanthemum Society and members have served regularly as Docents at the annual "Tree of the Nations" in the Cultural Center at Sunrise and the Charleston Art Gallery. One member served on the State Board of West Virginia Garden Clubs, Inc., another served as President of the Kanawha Judges Council, and the Members have served on the Kanawha Garden Council of Garden Clubs.

The club has moved humbly forward from its beginning and now today is eager to carry on further beautification in the community. Mrs. James S. Young of Lee Ave., DuPont City is completing her second term as president.

Belle Woman's Club, GFWC

In the early spring of 1959, Mrs. Noah Payne, a new resident of Belle, was very disappointed to learn that the town did not have a woman's club. Moving from a community where she was a very active member in woman's club work, the idea came to her mind immediately of discussing her plan with her newly acquired friends and neighbors to organize a club. She explained all the phases of community involvement that each one could become interested in, the feeling of being creative, the feeling of being needed, and the many projects that a club could do for the betterment of the area. Much to her surprise the enthusiasm was great, so she contacted the Capitol District President for the necessary information and requirements for organizing a woman's club.

To organize the club, a membership of twenty-five members were needed to receive a charter. By December of that same year the goal was reached, meeting on the 8th of the month at the home of Mrs. Nancy B. Martin. The object of this organization is to promote projects for the betterment of civic, cultural and education advancements in the community, the state and the nation. The women of Belle and the area, who are willing to accept the responsibilities and are in harmony with the aims of the club, are eligible to active membership.

Elected as the first officers at that meeting were President:

Mrs. Noah Payne; Vice President, Mrs. Ira Thompson; Recording Secretary, Mrs. Robert Garrett; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Roger Hindle; Treasurer, Mrs. Lawrence Lilly; Historian, Mrs. Charles Lawrence; Parliamentarian, Mrs. Nancy B. Martin. Other charter members present were Miss Eva Lee Ashley, Mrs. Roger Booth, Miss Mildred Cunningham, Mrs. James Farren, Mrs. Howard Gardner, Mrs. Arnold Grinstead, Mrs. Jack Hackworth, Mrs. James Hill, Mrs. H. J. Martin, Mrs. Frances Perrine, Mrs. Clyde Preast, Mrs. Manville Stephens, Mrs. Kenneth White and Mrs. J. E. White. The name of the club was to be The Belle Woman's Club, it was federated in 1960 with the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

During the sixteen years since becoming a federated club, there are many outstanding projects that are recognized throughout the community, the state and the nation that can be accredited to the diligent efforts of the Belle Woman's Club. It takes its place in the community affairs through education, conservation, civic projects, health, arts, international affairs, home life, public affairs, and many other phases of community-sponsored programs.

Acting as the steering committee, the club, with the cooperation of several of the town's other civic clubs, purchased a high speed drill for the Dental Clinic, located at that time in the Belle Elementary School. Supporting the clinic financially by purchasing necessary supplies for operation, providing volunteer workers each week to assist the dentist on duty, this was a project of the club until the clinic was relocated at Carver School in 1970. One of the members continues today working on this project with the club providing toys, books and games for the children's use while waiting for their appointments.

A first for the town of Belle was organized by the club. With the combined efforts of most of the other organizations in the area and the support of the town government, the Town Fair was held in 1963, in commemoration of the Centennial celebration of West Virginia's 100th calendar year. Another important project that same year for the club was the possibility of restoring the "Old Stone House". An appointed committee for the club, petitioned the Mayor and Council, to purchase the house and several adjoining houses for restoration and the building of a public library on the south side of the old house. This proposal was rejected. The club did not give up on this, however, it did dampen our spirits somewhat. At the Capitol District Convention of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, held in Charleston on September 20, 1975, the club proposed for adoption the restoration of this house as a district project for the year 1976. A motion was made to table this project for further study. The house has been registered with the West Virginia Antiquities Commission at Morgantown, West Virginia, and has been added to the inventory of the state's historic properties, including nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The American Heritage Committee for the club, Leoma W. Ballard and Louise J. Edwards, have organized the Belle Historical Restoration Society, Inc., applied for a state charter, consulted with West Virginia Arts and Humanities Council, Jim Andrews, Associate Director and applied for a Bicentennial grant from the West Virginia American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, to assist us in any manner or means for securing this house for restoration for our community.

Conducting all club meetings for so many years in the Walker Machinery Conference Room, for which we were very thankful, the club members checked numerous buildings for sale in the general area, with an idea to buy, for a club house of our own. During the 1966-67 term, an opportunity arose. The Diamond Alkali Company leased to the club a small four room stucco house located on Stubb Drive,

with permission to renovate and remodel in any manner necessary to accommodate the membership. With a great deal of excitement, enthusiasm and determination, the work began. Spending the summer tearing out petitions, installing kitchen cabinets and just general repairs, long hours of hard labor and a great deal of expense, the clubhouse was ready for its first meeting to be held on September 22, 1966. This was another dream fulfilled for the club members. During the next few years, most of the club's activities and projects centered around the furnishings for the club house. We did, however, manage to keep up with the required support of the GFWC projects and contributed to a minimum number of community affairs.

The 1968-69 club year produced another first in the town with the Fireman's Bazaar, sponsored by the Belle Woman's Club. Invitations were issued to all civic organizations in the area to participate by reserving a table, at a minimum cost, to display and sell crafts. This was so successful that the club voted to sponsor a bazaar annually, scheduled six weeks before Christmas. All proceeds derived by the club that year were donated to the Belle Fire Department to help purchase new uniforms for the firemen.

A stone planter at the east end of the town's corporate limits, located on U. S. 60, was erected by the club in 1972. Shrubs and flowers were planted by the conservation department of the club, purchased by a club member, Mrs. David Harless Sr., in memory of her daughter, Janie Harless.

Another project that the club had worked on for several years became a reality during the 1973-74 term. A community sign "Welcome to Belle" was installed at each end of the town. Working with the Department of Highways, the Mayor and Council, and Mr. Howard Blackwell, with many hours spent on the telephone, this project finally was completed. All interested churches and organizations were invited to place their emblem on this sign. This is a real asset to our town, one that was on the club's project list for so many years.

A bronze plaque in memory of the club's only honorary member, Nancy B. Martin, was purchased in 1974-75 year, to be erected and dedicated when the new Recreational Center for Belle is completed.

Winding up the years to the present day, the club has donated to the Belle Ambulance Service and to the Firemen's Auxiliary to help resurface the floor damaged during flooding of the storm drains, conducted two free "PAP" test clinics for the American Cancer Society, in conjunction with the Kanawha County Health Department; participated with the Kanawha Valley Women's clubs and the Kanawha County Sheriff's Department with the selling of whistles and the program "Blow the Whistle on Crime"; was a member of the Citizens Recycling Council for the collection of newspapers and glass; established a Student Loan Scholarship; continued support of the area schools, Scouts, Little League, Camp Horseshoe, 4-H Camps, planting of red, white and blue bulbs throughout the town and area and many others.

In keeping with the Spirit of 1776, the club is very busy with several projects. One already completed was the purchasing of one of the dolls, a replica, of one of West Virginia's first ladies, assigned to the club was Bertie Ison Martin Conley, wife of William G. Conley, who served as governor from 1929-1933, which is to be placed in the new Science and Culture Center at Charleston, for public display. By the time this book is complete and has gone to press, the railroad depot at Belle, will be sporting the traditional colors of red, white and blue. Permission was granted the club in 1975 by the Penn Central, now Conrail, to paint the depot. A Bicentennial flag, purchased by the club will be flying from the

top. With the assistance of the Belle Lions, the Energetic Grandmother's Club, and the Fire Department, this project has added a very colorful attraction to the town's scenery.

The Belle Woman's Club entered the contest by the General Federation of Women's Clubs American Heritage Contest by compiling a history of Belle. So much interest was generated from the search for historical information that the club decided to have a book printed for the public to purchase. So the History of Belle and our adjoining communities will be available for many to read and treasure.

Throughout the years the club has been awarded numerous honors at the district, state and national level, for its work in the various departments of GFWC work. Every year since its beginning it has been an honor point club. To mention several outstanding honors, we will have to include: the first place plaque from the GFWC, and a certificate of Merit from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society for the lap robes made by all the members for wheel chair patients; the first and only club in the nation to win such an award, first place award in the area of Edythe Reeder Camp Galahad Fund; first place award for the Pearl S. Buck Birthplace Project; also the first club in the state to have 100% membership in the Pearl Buck Foundation; first place award for advertising in the Capitol District for three consecutive years, with ads in the West Virginia Club Woman's Magazine. There has been a citation from the United States Treasury Department in recognition of patriotic service in United States Savings Bonds Program; numerous second place awards, as well as certificates, honorable mention and individual honors to members of the club. The club has had several members to serve as officers or chairwomen at the state, district and national level.

With a membership of more than seventy women, and still growing, the Belle Woman's Club, will continue to work, to serve with genuine pride, to accomplish their aims and contributions to the community, the state and the nation.

Past Presidents

Mrs. Noah Payne	1959-1961
Mrs. Phillip Jenkins	1961
Mrs. Howard Gardner	1962-64, 68-69, 72-73
Mrs. James T. Hill	1962-1963
Mrs. W. C. Ballard	1964-1965
Mrs. Jack Holmes	1965-1966, 67-68
Mrs. Adrian Edwards	1966-1967
Mrs. R. O. Hall	1969-1971
Mrs. Josephine Coburn	1971-1972, 1975-1976
Mrs. Cecil Lewis	1973-1974
Mrs. R. D. Casto, Sr.	1974-75
Mrs. Marjorie Palmer	1976-1978

Energetic Grandmother's Club No. 726

Meeting at the home of Mrs. Louise Gardner on January 27, 1965, a group of women from the area of Belle and Witcher, and Edith McKnight, Organizer of Grandmother's Clubs of America, organized the new chapter. This chapter was named Energetic Grandmother's Club of Belle. There were eleven charter members present, with Mrs. Dorothy Brown selected as the honorary member. Elected as officers at the meeting were: president, Mrs. Marjorie Palmer; vice president, Mrs. Marie White; secretary, Mrs. Louise Hobbs; and Mrs. Marguerite Day, treasurer.

Objects of the club are: To honor grandmotherhood through the observance of the second Sunday of October as National Grandmother's Day, to work to have it so established by legislation throughout the United States. (2) To further the social and educational interests of its members.

(3) To promote better understanding of privileges and obligations of American citizenship. (4) To contribute to the research of causes and cure of children's diseases. (5) To support charitable projects as adopted by the National Federation Convention. (6) To promote interest in, and to work for and to contribute to the National Haven Building Fund.

The club takes its place in the community in participation of the Town Fair, delivering fruit baskets to shut-in persons, transporting of needy persons to fill appointments, dresses dolls, plan tours for its members and many other civic projects are aided by the club.

Charter members: Evelyn Surbaugh, Pearl Ward, Lorena McDanils, Pansy Edwards, Bessie Hambrick, Majorie Palmer, Louise Hobbs, Marie White, Marguerite Day, Louise Gardner (deceased) and Dorothy Brown.

Funeral Home in Belle

During the mid nineteen thirties, Mr. Sam Wynns established a funeral home in Belle, West Virginia, located at the corner of 9th Street and Dupont Avenue. Today this building is occupied by the Belle Super Market.

In 1938, a new building was constructed on the corner of 12th Street and Dupont Avenue. Mr. Wynns and his associate, Mr. Bruce Bartlett of Charleston, operated this company until 1943, at which time Mr. Wynns sold his business to R. Dayle Fidler and his partner, Mark Nordeck. Shortly after they acquired the business Mr. Nordeck died. Mr. Fidler then took as his partner Hector D. Frame, who had been employed by Mr. Wynns. This later became a partnership known as Fidler and Frame.

In 1963, the business was incorporated with R. Dayle Fidler, Ruby Fidler, Hector D. Frame and Laurel Frame as stockholders.

After the death of Mr. Fidler in 1973, the corporation was reorganized with Mr. Frame as the president and Richard Fidler as vice president. This partnership continued until January of 1975 when Mr. Frame retired and sold his interest in the business to Mr. Richard Fidler.



fidler & frame funeral home

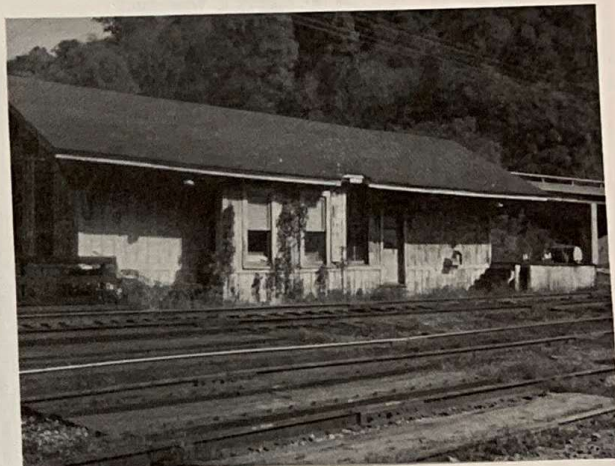
Railroad Depot at Belle

The first depot in Belle, during the year 1923, was a box car of the NYC, according to information related to this writer by eighty-six-year-old W. R. Hastings, the first agent to work here. The site was on the south side of the tracks, located in the general area of the "Old Stone House".

In 1926, the depot at Black Betsy, West Virginia, Putman County, was closed, dismantled and shipped by box car to Belle, reassembled at the present location. A Mr. Kibby was

the first agent to work at this new location. Others who worked as agents throughout the years were Mr. Hall, Mr. Brown, Mr. Hastings, Okey Shreves, James Casebolt and Mr. Hastings returning to work again until its facilities were no longer needed.

Today the depot is used very little. With a special interest in its present condition, the Belle Woman's Club secured permission from the railroad company to paint it red, white and blue, in commemoration of the Bicentennial and preservation. Hopefully it will eventually become a museum for railroad replicas.



railroad depot

Historical Sites' Possibilities Told

As Kanawha County rushes toward its 200th anniversary, a young architect told county commissioners yesterday its people should begin to preserve some of its yesterdays.

Historians reportedly point out that the heritage of the past is responsible for the culture of the future, a member of the Regional Development Authority declared.

The county, under the hand of the Virginia Assembly, became a legal entity on Oct. 1, 1789. To avoid a scramble for remnants and artifacts when the anniversary dates arrives, the County Court some months ago asked RDA to outline a plan for preservation of landmarks important to the county's history.

H. H. Smallridge III, urban design coordinator for RDA, presented the first draft of an outline to "keep the past a living part of tomorrow."

Listing approximately 40 sites as samples for possible preservation, Smallridge said four had the greatest potential. He identified the possibilities as these:

1. Stone mansion at Belle, said to have been built about 1810. The 18-inch thick walls were made from sandstone quarried nearby.
2. Brick house of 14 rooms located just above the old stone house. Walls of this home are three courses thick; the bricks were fashioned and burned on the premises.
3. Malden Salt Industry. There are several examples of the county's industrial past that can be preserved for tourist visitations.
4. Dutch Hollow wine cellar. Located about a half mile north of the city limits. All that remains of this once prosperous wine facility are the three stone masonry caverns, constructed by slave labor.

Smallridge told commissioners no attempt had been made to establish a cost level for preserving these sites of the past.

The architect said he would return in another 30 days to update commissioners on progress of his research.

Stagecoach Rates High In Old Days

The first stagecoach company, operated by two men named Caldwell and Surbough, started operating between Charleston and Lewisburg in 1827.

The one-way fare was \$7. Coaches operated on the newly-opened James River and Kanawha Turnpike, which was extended to the Big Sandy River the following year.

Trips from the Big Sandy to Lewisburg, via Charleston, were made three times weekly. The fare was \$4.50 from the Big Sandy to Charleston and \$11 from the Big Sandy to Lewisburg.

By hard driving and changing horses often to cover 70 to 80 miles per day, the trip from the Big Sandy to Lewisburg could be made in about two and a half days.

Baggage, weighing more than 20 pounds per passenger, was carried at the rate of \$4 per 100 pounds for each 100 miles.

Do You Remember When?

The convicts from Moundville Penitentiary built Route 60 to Belle? Bank Night at the Belle Theatre?

When someone set off dynamite in a field on New Year's Eve?

Carney's Drug Store?

The Coal Company Store?

Joe Bonovitch treated people for cancer?

Excursion boats from Charleston stopped at Gardner's Landing for picnics and games?

The Black Outs of World War II?

Willis McClung Store?

When you could buy ice cream sodas and coke at the drug store?

The Dupont Friendly Inn? (Now the El Chico.)

Miners strike, when men came by train and marched with guns to the Marmet Ferry?

The labor and passenger trains?

When the earth slide killed nine men building the Marmet Locks?

The flood of 1940, when nine men went through the locks, one was drowned? Most of west Belle was under water.

Camp Piatt Restaurant, operated by the Wiseman's?

The White Club House on the hill, scene of lunches, parties, dances, and theatrical productions and concerts?

The old Twilight Baseball League?

When a prohibition-time bootleg joint and night club, with moonshine by the jug or drink, was operating up Simmons Creek?

Stella and Beulah's Beauty Shop?

The Bowling Alley? Now Seacrist Store.

The American Legion baseball field on Eighth Street? (Present site of the Judson Baptist Church.)

Edwards Hardware Store and Pin Ball Machines?

Edith's Gift Shop?

The Marmet Locks West Belle

The Marmet Locks is located on the Kanawha River with the controls on the Belle side of the river. Each year about 8,000 barges pass through these locks. Completed in 1934, the locks boast two chambers and a lift of twenty-four feet. Dimensions of the locks, operated by the U. S. Corps of Engineers, are 56 feet by 360 feet, and a rise of twenty-four feet (A rise is the distance between the upper pool and lower pool).

Built by the Dravo Company of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to make river transportation easier, the main products pass-

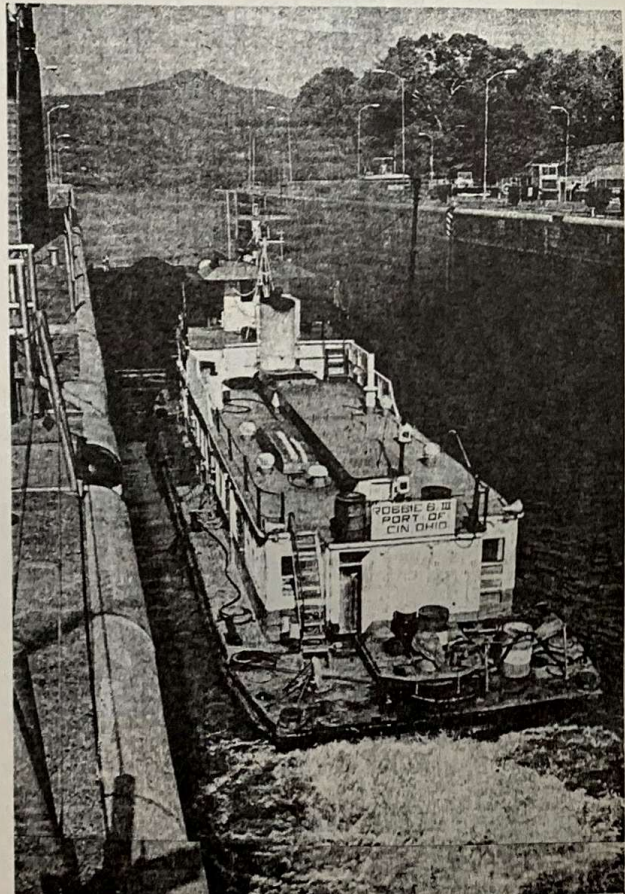
ing through by barge are coal, petroleum, steel, and salt, the majority being coal. During the construction of the locks, an earth slide buried seven men and two more were killed making a total of nine men lost.

The gage above the locks is 18.0, but can vary. UHF system communication to Huntington, West Virginia Corps of Engineers, with FM radio used to communicate with the boats.

Q. What was the year the "Kanawha Belle" steamboat went over the dam near Marmet and what caused the accident?

G. J. Lewis
South Charleston

A. The date was late evening of Dec. 19, 1901. One account says the pilot, M. W. Calvert, became slightly ill while the Kanawha Belle was docked at Pratt, on a downstream run from Montgomery to Charleston. He asked for relief and the relief pilot, J. H. Snyder, went up the back stairs from below decks to the pilothouse. It was dark and snowing. Snyder was not oriented to the boat's position, thought it was farther upstream than it was. He mistook the lights of Lock A for Handley coal tipple, and the lights of another boat approaching the locks from downstream for a coal tow. Intending to pass the supposed coal tow in midstream, Pilot Snyder rang for half-speed ahead and drove the boat over the dam, apparently not knowing the true position of the Kanawha Belle until it was on the dam and breaking up. Eight lives were lost, but Calvert and Snyder survived.



Barge Leaves Second Chamber and Heads Down the Kanawha In Minutes, Craft Will Pass Charleston

In acct with 115

253
228

A. E. Oliver June 1916

June 13. Bacon	55
" " Milk	25
" " Coffee	20
" " Cream	05
" " Coca-cola	05
" " Fat	05
" 17 Bananas	10
" " Fat	05
" 17 Potatoes	35
" " Sugar	20
" " Cream	05
" 19 Coffee	20
" " Candy	05
" " Fat	05
" 20 Potatoes	35
" " Cream	05
" 21 Fat	05
" " Bananas	05
" 22. Molse	25

Paid in full 5.25

June 25 Chances	80
" Coffee	20
" " Milk	25
" 26 Fat	05
" " Bananas	10
" 27 Molse	23
" 28 Potatoes	35
" " Cream	05

253

June 29 Coffee	20
" " Eggs	28
" " Cream	05
July 1 Bananas	20
" " Smoker	10
" " Orange	10
" " Cream	05
" 2 horse tie	150
" 3 potatoes	25
" " Lard	25
" " Beans	25
" " Milk 598	25
" " Coffee	15
" " Cream	10
" 4 Bread	10
" 5 potatoes	25
" " Potatoes	20
" " Onions	05
" " Eggs	28
" 6 Bread	20
" " Bananas	05
" " Cream	05
" 8 Potatoes	25
" " Cream	10
" 11 Coffee	20
" " Sugar	20
" " Bananas	05
" " Tomatoes	17
" " Onions	05
" " Cream	05

APRIL 13, 1926



Check Price for Price Value for Value



Reduced Prices

- Touring - **\$510**
- Roadster - **510**
- Coupe - - **645**
- Sedan - - **735**
- Landau - - **765**
- ½ Ton Truck - **395**
(Chassis Only)
- 1 Ton Truck - - **550**
(Chassis Only)

f. o. b. Flint, Michigan

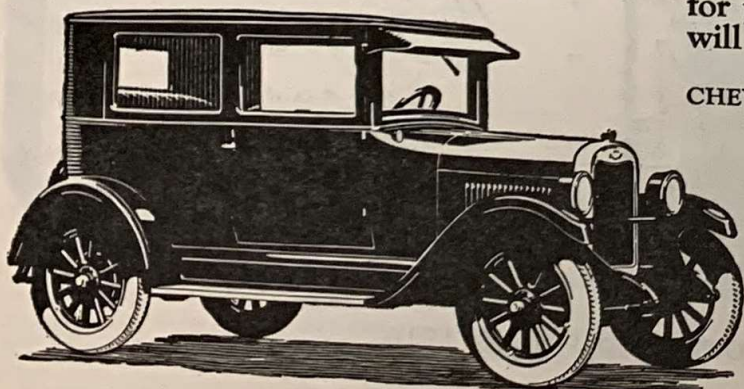
Think how low the recent reduction of Chevrolet prices brings the cost of a fully equipped automobile. Compare what you get for Chevrolet's new low prices with any other car in the world.

Remember that Chevrolet equipment includes, three-speed transmission, disc clutch, Duco finish, alemite lubrication—on closed models Fisher Bodies and balloon tires and scores of other features essential on a modern motor car.

Remember that Chevrolet provides a performance so smooth—so powerful that it will amaze you. Skim over country roads. Plow through mud and sand. Rush up hills that balk bigger and higher priced cars. One ride in the Improved Chevrolet will convince you that equal power, flexibility, comfort and beauty cannot be obtained at anywhere near its price.

Now, more than ever before, check price for price and value for value—and you will buy a Chevrolet!

CHEVROLET MOTOR COMPANY, DETROIT, MICH.
DIVISION OF GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION



The Coach
\$645

F. O. B. Flint, Mich.

PAY ENVELOPE 1913

Employees will examine their account, and if not correct, report to the clerk in person before pay day. This account must be presented on pay day, properly signed, and is NOT NEGOTIABLE.

Mr. *Walter J. ...*

BLUE GREEN GOAL & LUMBER CO. IN ACCOUNT WITH

DEBITS		CREDITS	
Tons Loaded	@		
Feed Cutting	@		
Days	@	4	80
Yards	@		
Cash	@		
Checks	@		
Board & Labor	@		
TOTAL CREDITS		4	80
Scrap	@	4	00
Powder	@		
Overdraft	@		
Rent	@		
Coal	@		
Smithing	@		
Checks	@		
Hospital	@		
Doctor	@		
Relief Fund	@		
Board and Labor	@		
TOTAL DEBITS		4	00
Balance Due			280

RETAIN THIS STATEMENT
EARNINGS 1913

27985

Notice to the Workman: You can find out the amount of your EARNINGS and DEDUCTIONS at the OFFICE BEFORE THE FIFTH DAY of the month. After that day no ERRORS will be corrected unless next month. Sign your name to the RECEIPT below BEFORE you come to the office for your money.

No. *1913*

Mr. *Walter J. ...*

Cartersboro, W. Va., 1913

In Account with **COALBELL COAL COMPANY.**

DR.		CR.	
To Bal. O. D. (last month)		By Tons	@
" Store Scrap		" " "	@
" Rent	10 00	" Yards	@
" Doctor		" " "	@
" Insurance		" " "	@
" Smithing		" " "	@
" Mine Checks		" Days	@
" Hospital		" " "	@
" Cash		" " "	@
" Board	10	" " "	@
" Workman's Compensation		" Board	
" Coal		" Mine Checks Returned	
" Water and Light		" Transfers	
" Labor		" Sundries	
" Stable		TOTAL	23 65
" E. & O. E.	TOTAL	Balance Due Workman	23 65
To Balance due Co.			

Interview With Oldest Resident of West Belle

The boundaries of West Belle begin at the west end of the DuPont Plant and extend to the site where the Smith Trucking Company is located, according to an interview with one of the oldest residents living in this part of the community.

Mrs. Inez Holder, relates that her house was the first one to be built in this section of Belle. The Lazote Plant, which is now DuPont, was only two years old (1927) when she and her husband bought their lot from the Hamilton Land Company. Other houses began to be constructed shortly after this by the families of Walter Keeney, Wert Harvey, Dr. Frazier, D. W. Stubblefield, Ward Wiseman, M. F. Burgess, and Dr. Robertson. This section has about one thousand population today.

According to several of the earliest settlers in this area there was an Indian grave with a stone marker bearing the date of 1700 at one time in this section of Belle. It was located on the river street in the 1800 block of West Riverview Drive.

With the addition of many places of business, West Belle is no longer just a residential section as it was for many years.

Burning Springs

In 1773, the Van Bibbers discovered a water spring that bubbled and ignited. It was so impressive to George Washington when he was surveying this area, that later he and Andrew Lewis purchased the land.

Nearby was a salt lick, formed by salt brine seepage. Early Kanawha settlers by the name of Ruffner drilled a well by a method invented to manufacture salt. This was the first drilled well in America. During 1841, while drilling for salt at the ends of the "Burning Springs", William Tompkins found a strong flow of natural gas. He used this gas under his vats of salt, and it is recorded to be the first use of natural gas.

In that remote and troubled year, the pioneer Van Bibbers and others discovered a spring just to the west of present-day Belle that emitted gas bubbles.

The explorers were surprised to find the gas would ignite, and would burn until a high wind put it out.

From this phenomenon came the community name of Burning Springs.

Two years later the tract including the spring was patented by George Washington and Gen. Andrew Lewis. In his visits to the land, Washington was supposed to have carved his initials on several nearby trees.

Salt played a part in the development of Belle and its environs as it did at Malden, Marmet and other valley towns.

In 1843 a salt well was sunk near the burning spring, and a pocket of natural gas was struck.

An oft-told anecdote grew from a Harvard professor's visit to this well later in the year.

The professor was riding by in a stage coach on the James River and Kanawha Turnpike when the rushing gas was noted. Being a man of inquisitive nature, he walked up to the well, and to see if it was combustible lit a match.

In the ensuing explosion the professor was singed and saddened, and had to jump into the Kanawha River to escape. Buildings around the well were destroyed.

That evening the owner of the well sent a friend to Charleston to arrest him for "wilfully and wantonly burning property—unless you find the fellow is a natural damn fool and didn't know any better."

The dejected Harvard man admitted responsibility for the explosion, and is reported to have given this answer to the emissary:

"It seems a pretty hard alternative; however, under the

circumstances, I feel it my duty to take advantage of the last clause and escape."

A traveler on the Midland Trail, following the Penn Central Railroad, crossing the little mountain stream that comes down from the north, heading towards the Kanawha River, may pause to examine a bronze marker, erected by the State of West Virginia in 1932, marking the spot where the spring was discovered bubbling.

The West Virginia Oil and Natural Gas Industry have erected an unusual monument on the campus of DuPont High School to preserve the history of the Burning Springs.

To the north of the Burning Springs, up the creek, is a very beautiful residential community known as Burning Springs Road. This area was originally owned by a Mr. Williams, but the first settler was Mr. Privel, according to one of the oldest residents of the area. Two other houses were there when Mr. and Mrs. Bonnet built their home in 1956. Today there are many. At the mouth of the creek, near the site of the springs, once stood a small church, The Church of God, pastor Miss Aida Hicks.

DuPont City

A short distance across U. S. Route 60 and the Penn Central Railroad tracks, with street entrances running north and south, is the small unincorporated community of DuPont City. This area is recorded in the history of the Kanawha Valley as an old Indian hunting camp, belonging to the Shawnees, who spent their winters hunting and trapping. Many arrowheads, flint knives, flint axes, beads and burial grounds have been found as proof of the Indians habitation. During the stage coach days there was a stop located at a site on the Kanawha River bank.

With a population of five hundred or more, most of the heads of the families are employed or retired employees of the DuPont Company, after which the town was named. The Charleston Cut Flower green house, operated by Joe Gregg, was located here for several years until the site was purchased by the Belle Lines Trucking Company for a terminal. This has recently been purchased by the Smith Transfer Company, who are operating a terminal at the present time.

In 1939, the first DuPont Senior High School was built in the community, grades from seven to twelve. With a decrease in enrollment, consolidating with Midway Junior High School, this school was converted to a junior high. In 1970, consolidation of the DuPont senior high students with the Cedar Grove High School students, made it necessary to build another school on the site of Joyland Park or commonly known as Hammons' grave.

On April 3, 1955, with sixty-three charter members, five officers (two elders and three deacons) and as a result of the vision, prayers and gifts of the Kanawha Salines Church at Malden, the DuPont City Presbyterian Church was organized. To date this is the youngest church within the Kanawha Presbytery.

Holly Lawn

A small, quiet, peaceful and secluded community, located between West Belle and DuPont City, on old Route 60, is Holly Lawn. As early as 1925, this was only a woodland, owned by a Mr. Everrel. According to one of the oldest residents of this area, Mr. Earl Stephens, this area was not developed until 1935. At this time, Mr. A. J. Holly purchased the land from the Charleston National Bank, and immediately developed it into streets and lots, selling to individuals.

It is an all-residential settlement of concerned and community-interested home owners. The streets are all paved and well-lighted. There are no available lots and it can boast of a population of about two hundred and fifty resi-

dents.

To the east of Holly Lawn, separating this community from West Belle is the Trail Drive-in Theater and the Mountaineer Room Restaurant. To its west is the Efav Stables and the River Oak Stables, operated by Anthony McCarus. Other businesses are C. W. Lambert Nationwide Insurance, Elliott Motel and Dixie Drive Inn. In this area, not known to many persons, is an old cemetery, with several grave sites whose hand carved stone markers bear the following inscribed names.

JAMES C. REYNOLDS
Died 1852

JOHN REYNOLDS
Died 1758

VAN BIBBER REYNOLDS
Died 1813

ELIZABETH REYNOLDS
Died 1838

Nothing definite could be found concerning these graves and markers, but it is an assumption that these people were cousins of the family of Robert F. Reynolds, as related to this writer by his great-great grandson, Charles Gardner.

Present West Belle Businesses

Tamio's Pizza, 1515 W. DuPont
ElChico, 1627 W. DuPont
Bridgette's Service Center, 1633 W. DuPont
Paul W. Keeney Builders Inc., 1801 W. DuPont
Smith Trailer Park, 2000 W. DuPont
Custom Van, 2001 W. DuPont

This is only shop of its kind in the state. This is a new trend in the automotive field. Custom conversions. Eddie Elswick, the owner, is happy with the Belle area. He is a native of W. Va. but not this area.

Belle Amusement Company, 1701 W. DuPont Ave., (former site of Camp Piatt). This company was started in 1937, by G. C. Fauber, Jr. and Johnny Bright, both deceased. It is owned and operated by Leoma Wiseman (Fauber) Ballard. Leoma, has served as a board of director and now a vice president in the Music Operators of America. She is secretary treasurer of the West Virginia Music & Vending Association. Both are trade associations. She is the first woman to ever hold an office in the MOA.

West Belle has a very lovely playground and picnic park located at the locks.

Ward & Leva Wiseman came to Belle in 1927. He dressed timber for the coal mines of Kanawha Hocking Coal & Coke Co. at Mammoth, W. Va. Two daughters: Arretta and Leoma can well remember the developing of this area. Mr. Wiseman contributed much to the developing of West Belle. Mr. Wiseman was a member of the Judson Baptist Church. He died in 1968.

Leva and Leoma reside in West Belle, Arretta in Charleston, her son, Anthony, in Belle. Back at that time, the sandlot games were quite an entertainment. It was an everyday event during the summer to swim the river to Marmet. Of course, this was before the present day locks. Back at that time, you could walk half-way across the river so it really was not much to continue on to the other side. In the winter you could walk the ice. It was so solid that cars were driven across. Across from 17th street, on the hill, was the Stop Ten house. This was where the travelers stopped to eat, sleep and take care of their horses.

West Belle at that time did not have too many houses. Walter & Maude Kenney came to West Belle in 1925. Walter was a carpenter and builder. Most of the houses in this area were built by Mr. Keeney. For a long time the children of

Walter Holder, Walter Keeney, M. F. Burgess, Ward Wiseman & Robert Harvey were the only children in the neighborhood. At one time Harvey's had a nine-hole golf course. Soft-ball and football games, and sleigh rides were really popular with the children of lower Belle.

Witcher

To the east, and adjoining, but not in the corporate limits of the town of Belle, is the small community of Witcher. At the time this information was obtained it had a population of eleven hundred and eight residents. Located along the Kanawha River, the area is surrounded by vast amounts of coal, natural gas, hardwood timber and petroleum. The land was owned by John Q. Dickinson, used for farming and obtaining salt brine. This brine was refined at the Salt Works in Belle. According to research it was named for Colonel John S. Witcher, who established a camp at the mouth of the creek during the Civil War.

The first road through the community was the James River Turnpike, replaced in 1968 by the multi-million dollar four lane expressway, which by-passes the main section of the community.

During the early 1900's, the Courtney Lumber Company operated a saw mill at the head of Witcher's Creek. The lumber was hauled on a narrow gage railroad, pulled by a small steam engine to the mouth of the creek, where it was loaded on flat cars of the K & M Railroad for shipment to various points.

In the early 1920's, Joe Nelson and his father-in-law, Hence Slack, operated a transportation company, hauling gas well equipment for the Owens Gas Company, by horse and wagon.

There are four churches located in the Witcher area, all being of Baptist faith. The largest and the oldest one is the Witcher Baptist, organized in April 1889 by T. Y. Keeney.

The White Brothers River Contractors, The Keeney Boats, as well as the United Fuel, now Columbia Gas Company of West Virginia, Kanawha Hocking Coal Company, Valley Camp Coal Company, Cabot Corporation, Hope Natural Gas Company and Consolidated Gas Supply Company are located in the area, up Witcher's Creek. Forest covers most of this area and the land is leased by lumber and coal companies. There are but a few business places in the area, with most of the community used as home sites for the residents.

River Transportation on the Kanawha

It all began with the primitive canoes of the Indians, which were hewn from the trunks of cedar or walnut trees. They were usually about four to six feet long. Around 1750 or so, a larger craft to carry furs and provisions for the traders was needed. At this time the Mackinaw boat was adopted. Hand hewn planks, an inch and one half thick were fastened by twelve feet wide and carried four oarsmen. Going down stream was easy, but upstream was a different matter. The keel boat was then devised, which steered better and could carry a capacity of fifteen to fifty tons of cargo. Still other types of boats recorded were the Broadhorn and rafts made of timber, often measuring three hundred yards long.

The first wood burning craft to navigate any interior stream was built in 1811. By 1819 a steam boat called the Robert Thompson is recorded in ascending the Kanawha River, traveling as far as Red House where it failed to get through the shoals so it had to return to the Ohio River. The golden era of the packet boats was between the years of 1830-1855, carrying passengers, mail and freight.

Towing, a term used on inland rivers, means the combining of barges into a compact mass and pushing behind with a towboat. This method originated in the Ohio River coal

traffic in the 1840's. Several towboats were around at this time, one of which was the old "Gondola", often seen docked at the Gardner Landing in Belle.

Another phase of river work, familiar to the people in this area, is the White Brothers River Contractors, and the Keeney Boats, located at a landing at Witcher, West Virginia.

White Brothers Boats

Woodford White was born in Virginia in 1820, and was engaged in the business of building boats on the James River. Early in 1840 this family migrated to western Virginia where he began work on the Kanawha. The family settled in the Witcher area and reared their family. After several years of river work in this area, Mr. White retired and turned the operation of the boats over to his son Thomas. After marriage in 1869 to a Keeney girl, whose name was unattainable, Thomas later formed a partnership with his brother-in-law T. Y. Keeney.

Wiley C. White, son of Thomas, worked for the United States Government in charge of the Coast Guard repair of boats on the Kanawha River. On November 3, 1929, Wiley bought half interest in the Emory S. Keeney Sr., boat company, operating as Keeney and White until Mr. White retired in 1942, but this did not end his interest in the partnership as his son Harry F. began his career in the river boat company.

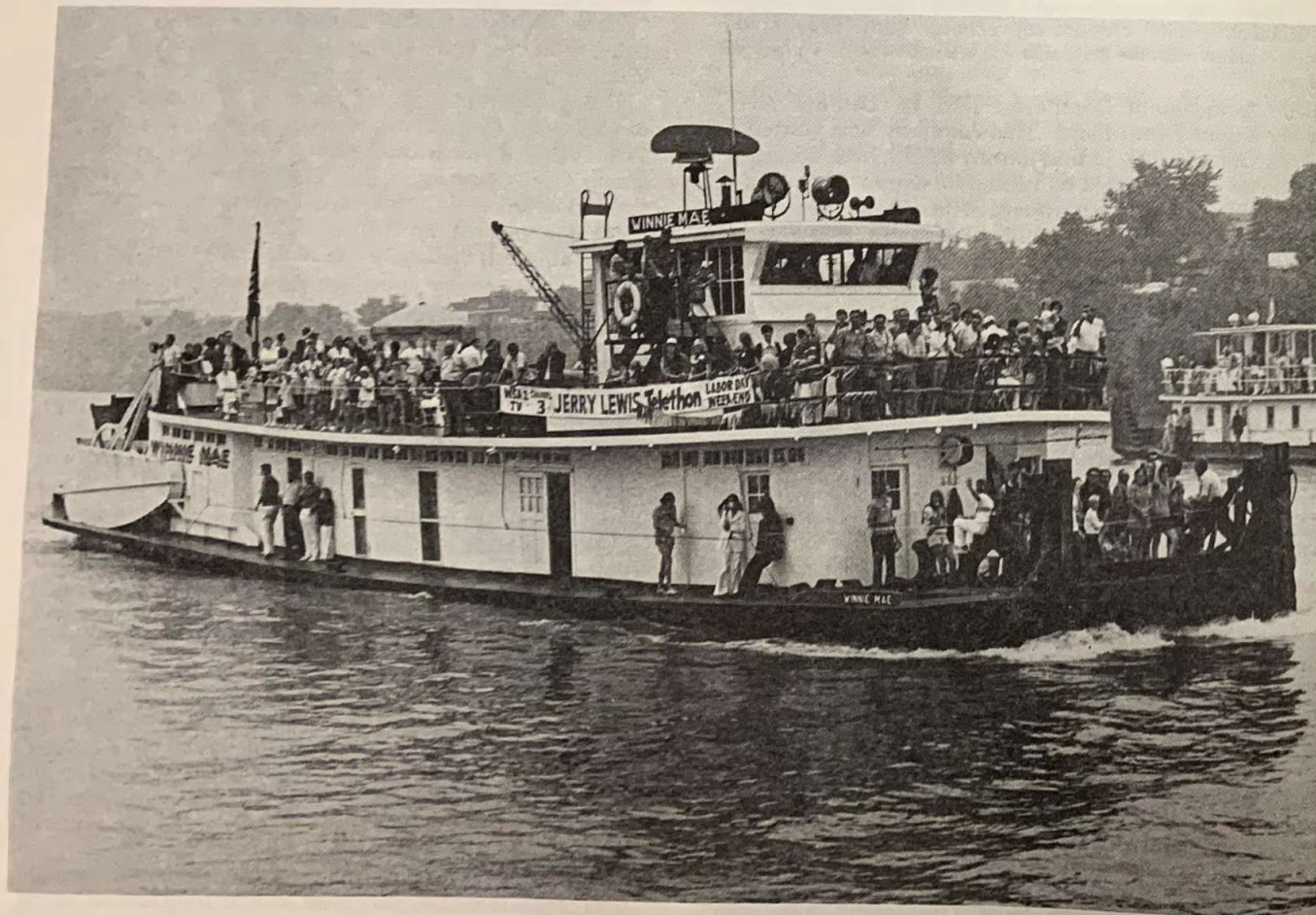
Shortly after the death of Wiley in 1957, Harry F. and his brother bought the E. S. Keeney interest, changing the name of the company to White Brothers, Incorporation, River

Contractors. This incorporation also owns the White Towing Company, which does work on the Mississippi, Tennessee, Mononghelia, Ohio and Kanawha Rivers. Working along with his father Harry, is Richard, who resides with his wife and two sons at Witcher. Another son Harry Jr., was a pilot for the company, towing coal to the Ohio River, until his death in 1971.

Clifford B. White and his wife Marie had two sons. William C. and Thomas W. Bill worked a short time with the boat company but resigned to accept a position as Assistant Director for the West Virginia Credit Union. He resides with his wife Maralu and their five children at Mineral Wells, West Virginia.

Thomas W. began his work for the Ohio River Company at the age of eighteen, as a Cub Pilot. A few weeks before his twenty-first birthday he passed the examination for his pilot license, which he was presented on his birthday. This license extended from Pittsburgh to Cairo, Illinois. He was the youngest man to ever receive this honor. Working for several years he decided to take the examination for a master license, which he passed, and became a captain. Tom worked for the company for fourteen years, until his death in 1969.

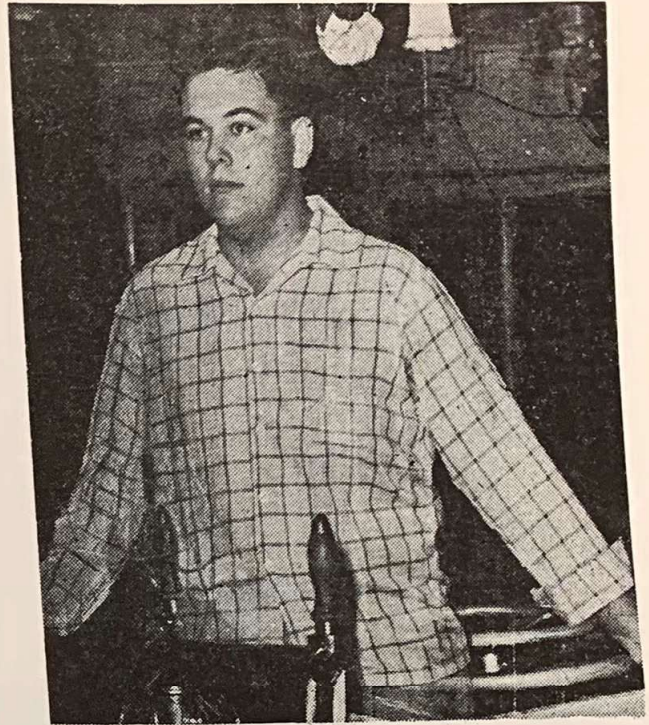
During the summer of 1972 at Charleston, West Virginia, the first "Sternwheel Reggetta" race was planned. Entering their boat the "Winnie Mae", the White Brothers were the winners of the race. In 1973 this same boat won first place, but in 1974 it lost to the Robin D. During the latter part of the summer of 1974, the "Winnie Mae" was completely destroyed by fire.



The "Winnie Mae" 1972 Reggetta Winner



*White Brothers
Clifford and Harry*



YOUTHFUL HELMSMAN of a large diesel riverboat is Thomas White, 18, of Witcher. The boy, who was graduated from DuPont High School at Belle only four months ago, is shown in the wheelhouse of the towboat "Charles R. Stevenson" which he steers on the Ohio River between Huntington and ports north of Pittsburgh. (Gazette Photo)



*Laying cable for the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company
at Charleston, West Virginia*

Youth 'On Course' At Towboat Helm

By James A. Haught
Staff Writer for The Gazette

Eighteen-year-old Thomas Wiley White of Witcher doesn't waste time going after what he wants.

When he was a small boy, he decided he wanted to be a riverboat pilot. And today—four months after he finished high school—he's near his goal.

"I'm only a steersman now," the brown-haired youth said. "But I'll be a pilot as soon as I become 21 and pass the Coast Guard tests."

Tom, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford B. White of Orchard Ave. in Witcher, is employed by the large Ohio River Co. of Cincinnati, O. His job is steering the company's big 2,400-horsepower towboat, "Charles R. Stevenson," on its runs from Huntington to river ports north of Pittsburgh.

The craft usually pushes a total of 20 barges, stretching out more than 1,000 feet along the Ohio.

"It's harder to handle a boat than you'd think," Tom said. "Everything takes a long time. The boat won't stop all at once like a car, and when it comes into a bend, you have to start turning early so the barges will have time to swing around."

The youth, who was graduated from DuPont High School last May, explained that he works directly under the captain or the pilot in the wheelhouse of the "Stevenson." The large, three-screw diesel vessel also has 16 other crew members including two mates, three engineers, six deck hands, a cook and a maid.

"We all work two six-hour shifts a day," he said. "Since we live on the boat, we work continually for 30 days and then get 10 days off."

"It's a confining life, but I like it. It's the only kind of work I'll be satisfied with from now on."

Tom comes by his love for the river naturally. His grandfather, Wiley C. White, used to be in charge of the Coast Guard repair boats on the Kanawha River. And his father worked on riverboats before going to work at the DuPont Chemical Co. plant at Belle.

And Tom's older brother, Bill, a West Virginia University graduate, worked on towboats during the summers between college terms.

"I guess it's sort of in our blood," the youngest comer to the riverboat clan said.

The Beginning of The Keeney Contracting Company

The business was started by T. Y. Keeney, and the work consisted of River Contracting, buiding coal tipples, cribs and break water to break ice flows so that they wouldn't jump the wood barges.

T. Y. Keeney was the grandfather of Lon, Fred and Cameron Keeney. He was also a Baptist minister. He was the leader in organizing churches and civic organizations for the community and the valley. He ran the business when Lon, Fred and Cam were school age.

When T. Y. Keeney retired because of age, his Church work continued. His associates in the ministry were Reverend B. F. Howell, Reverend W. H. Kersey, Dr. T. C. Johnson, and Reverend J. B. Holt. They furnished the leadership from Charleston to Gauley Bridge, including small churches in the rural district.

The business was taken over by T. G. Keeney and E. S. Keeney. That was around the year of 1906 and was operated as a partnership.

During this period of time T. G. Keeney left E. S. Keeney to run the business while he went to work in charge of the boat Capt. Turtle with the government. This work consisted mostly of removing debris and large trees in the river, this was called "snags" so the name of the boat finally was called "Snag Boat". The boat Capt. Turtle also assisted the U. S. Government Boat, which was called "The Addison". The

dredge boats and Snag Boat had living quarters and operated six days a week.

The Kanawha River was just beginning to improve so navigation was increasing and continued to expand and demanded more operating capitol. They always had to operate on apportions such as we call budgets today.

After the activity increased on the river, T. G. Keeney left the government and returned to the contracting business with E. S. Keeney. During that time they worked for many different gas companies laying pipelines across the Kanawha River. They built cribs for the following coal companies: Campbell's Creek (known now as Amhurst), Kanawha and Hocking, Hutchinson, Kelly's Creek, Marmet, Winfrede, Plymouth and Raymond City. The above activities were in the years 1911 to 1919. At that time T. G. Keeney sold his interest in the business to W. C. White, who was a long-time employee and a good friend to him.

T. G. Keeney worked for the DuPont Company building the foundation at the foot of the mountain for pipe support to the tower on the mountain at the plant in Belle, W. Va.

In 1930, T. G. Keeney, C. Fred Keeney and Cameron H. Keeney started the partnership of T. G. Keeney and Sons River Contractors. They purchased a small derrick boat named the "Gee Whiz" and tug boat called "The Jen". From that it grew to three fleets of boats. They had a large derrick boat built at Anticky, Ohio by M. A. Sayers Machiner. Other tug boats were called: Dana Mack, Shamrock, Edna and Nancy M. The above were all paddle wheel boats. Chloe Kay, Davies, and T. G. Keeney were all screw or propeller wheel boats. The T. G. Keeney was called the "flag ship" of the fleet.

In 1945, Lon G. Keeney joined the partnership, after leaving Belle Alkali Company, where he had worked as superintendent of the power plant for 25 years.

During 1945 Rip-Rap was installed at the North Charleston Carbide Tank Farm. From that the refining dock was built using steel pile and stone cribs. The work continued by using the Nancy M. as a switch boat from Institute to South Charleston Carbide Plant. After the expansion the Chloe Kay was placed into service. In 1958 the business at Carbide had outgrown the Chloe Kay. We decided to build a 450 h.p. all steel boat. The boat was built at the home harbor at Witcher, W. Va. We started to build the boat the later part of 1959 and completed it in 1960. The boat was named the T. G. Keeney and was placed into service at Carbide, July 1960. Later due to the heavy competition, the T. G. Keeney was sold in August 1965.

In 1946, T. G. Keeney died and the business was known as T. G. Keeney Sons. The partnership was dissolved and a corporation was formed in July, 1966 and it became T. G. Keeney Sons, Inc. In 1967, Cameron retired and a while later Fred retired. The business was operated by Lon G. Keeney.

Our work for the West Virginia Water Company from the year 1930 to the present, 1976, has been 14 river crossings from Montgomery to Nitro. The lines ranged from 24 inches in diameter to 12 inches. One line was placed across Coal River where we had to dynamite the ditch and then recover by hand. Some of the crossings were:

One 24" line at Broad Street—One 24" line at Thayer Street.

One 16" line at 35th Street, S.E.—one 12" line at Montgomery, W. Va.

One 12" line at Belle, W. Va.—one 12" line at South Charleston, W. Va.

One 14" line at Tyler Creek—one 20" line at Patrick Street Bridge.

One 12" line at Patrick Street across to Arlans Story.

One 12" line at Tyler Creek to South Charleston.

One 12" line at Institute to lower South Charleston.

One 12" line at Sattes to Amandaville (St. Albans).
The footage for these lines is approximately 13,500 lineal feet.

Our boats during the period 1940 to 1972, placed approximately 57 lines across the Kanawha River from the main land to Blaine Island. We also placed a 12 inch line along with seven other lines in the same ditch, including the six inch steam line through the insulated, 1-36 inch mechanical joint pipe, using divers to couple them together on bottom of the river. This was the longest run of pipes ever laid by carbide across the river.

The Electro Metallurgical Plant at Alloy had their first dock installed by our boats. They later expanded it to double its original size.

We furnished alloy slag for the repairing of the C and P Telephone and the United Fuel Gas Companies, river banks at their main offices.

Our boats assisted in the continuation of the South Side Expressway. Installed river tipples and moorings for Mike Stavigia Coal Co., which was taken over by P. A. Denny Coal Co. Many rip rap jobs at Carbide Institute Plant. As-

sisted in installing supports for the new Washington Street Bridge in Charleston.

During the past years employees on the boats consisted of closely related members of the Keeney family, sons, nephews, grandsons and great-grandsons, making the fifth generation.

The present owners of the boats are Eugene L. Porter and L. G. Keeney. The name of the company is still T. G. Keeney Sons, Inc. They have a derrick crane, derrick boat and flying saucer (tug boat).

The boats assisted in moving steel from the Kanawha River when the Kanawha City Bridge was shot or blasted down, also repaired a 16 inch water line that was broken during the removal of the steel.

The river work which we do is rip-raping, tug boating, driving of pile, laying pipe lines and submarine cables across the river, and cleaning out intakes.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank the many friends and companies that made our success possible during these years.





T. G. Keeney Sons, Inc., Boats

Community of Diamond

The oldest permanent settler in this small community was Samuel Moore. Coming from Clay County in 1887 where he was an overseer of the land holdings of the Dickinson family in that county. Mr. Moore bought a farm on the east side of Witcher's Creek, extending eastward for several acres of meadowland. A large two story frame house was built on the north side of the James River Turnpike, where all his children were born. Years later Mr. Moore built a general store nearby the house and he and his family operated it, along with the United States Post Office, serving as postmaster for seventeen years, succeeded by one of his daughters, Nora, who served for another fifteen years. Three of his children live in this community at the present, with Nora residing in the old homestead.

In 1901, an English coal mining company, leased land from John Q. Dickinson, known as the Malcolm Addition, for the operation of a large mine. Located in the area known as Walker's Hollow, with the tippie built across the highway to meet the rail track that was built by the K & M, across the large field between. The coal was loaded into the cars to be switched back to the nearby railroad yards for shipment where designated. It is stated that some of the coal was processed along Ferry Street to the river for shipment by barges.

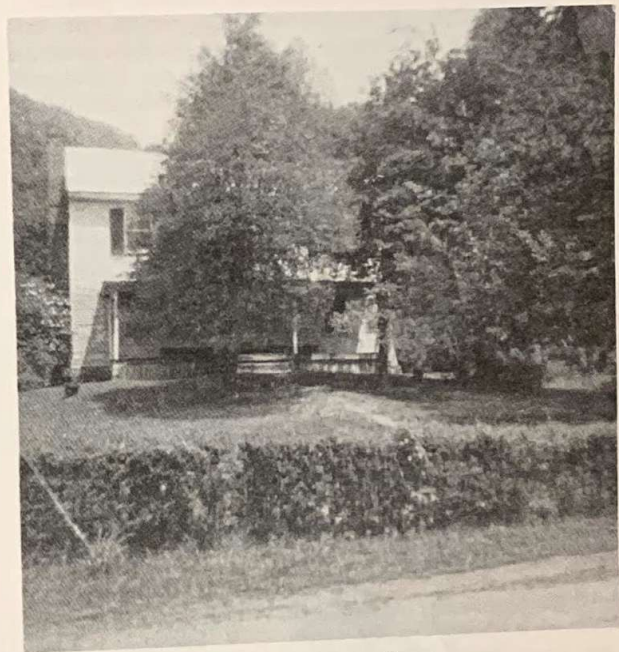
With the mine booming and the construction of a boarding house and several houses along the hill side of the road and to the south side as well, by the coal company, the community began its settlement. Families residing here then were the Steve and Walter Browns, James Hemmings, Henry Riddle, Holly Cotton, Dave Howery and many more whose names were not remembered. Many of these family heirs are still residents of Diamond. With the closing of the mine in 1905, the property reverted back to the Dickinson family, but the houses were incorporated into the Quincy Coal Company operations for rental property. Many of the families remained in the houses as renters, while others moved to other areas to seek employment. By 1916 much of the surrounding property was developed and sold as lots to home builders.

The first public school was built in 1900, on what was known to the people as the central location of the community. The two-room wooden facility was heated with pot belly stoves, water supplied for drinking was located outside in a natural spring, lunches were taken from home, or those living close enough walked home, and lessons were learned from very few precious books and written on slates with chalk. Bathroom facilities were also outdoors. This school-house was used as the community needed it, church services, funerals, social activities, and voting, or any other type of public meeting that was necessary.

A rapid increase in school age children resulted in the necessity of larger class room facilities, therefore in 1927 the two-room wooden school was moved from its site to the south side of the highway to make room for the new four-room brick one that had been proposed by the Board of Education. During the time this construction was underway, the students attended classes in various locations throughout the community. This school was used for several years, with the addition of wooden portable rooms and a kitchen to serve hot lunches, as the enrollment increased steadily from year to year. In 1968 the school was completely torn down to make way for the new four lane highway.

Located at 200 Ferry Street on a beautiful eight acres or more campus, with the open meadowland of the Dickinson property on its background scene, the large modern brick Midland Trail Elementary School was built. The school house contains 14 rooms, with an up-to-date library,

cafeteria, offices, heating and cooling system, modern sanitary facilities and a play area used in inclement weather. This school was the proposed plan of the Board of Education to consolidate the Diamond, Dickinson and Shrewsbury into one school. Most of the students attending here are transported by school buses. Extra-curricular activities such as art, music, sports and others are offered to the students, as well as the speech, hearing, dental and health clinics provided by the school board. In January, 1967 classes began. Mrs. Reba K. Eplin was the first principal and today is currently serving in that position.



Samuel Moore House

Located to the far west end of the community was the Clayco Gas Company compressor station, with several houses built for the employees. In 1920 the Union Carbide purchased this operation. This facility was used, for many years, to pump natural gas from Diamond to its South Charleston Chemical Plant. The plant ceased operation in 1969 and the buildings were demolished. In 1970 the 100 acre tract was bought by the Mack Trucking Company, a distributor of heavy duty construction equipment.

In the year of 1920 the U.O.A.M., a secret order, constructed a two story building on the front street to conduct their meetings. A few years later, 1924, a similar lodge, Knights of Pythias, built a two story hall. Using this for many years, due to a decline in its membership, the hall was sold and is now an apartment building.

Located about fourteen miles east of Charleston, just a short distance south of the busy U.S. 60 Expressway, across the railroad tracks of the Penn Central System you will enter the community. To the right is the only place of business operating, Romine's Grocery, which has been in business, at various locations, since 1916.

A clean, quiet and friendly residential community, where its peopel enjoy life in a close knit unity; always ready and willing to aid one another when the need arises. They too, one can attest, can reflect many happy memories of yesteryear and join with each and every other American in thanksgiving to their early settlers.