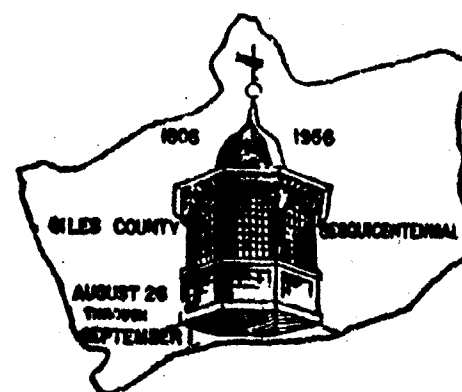
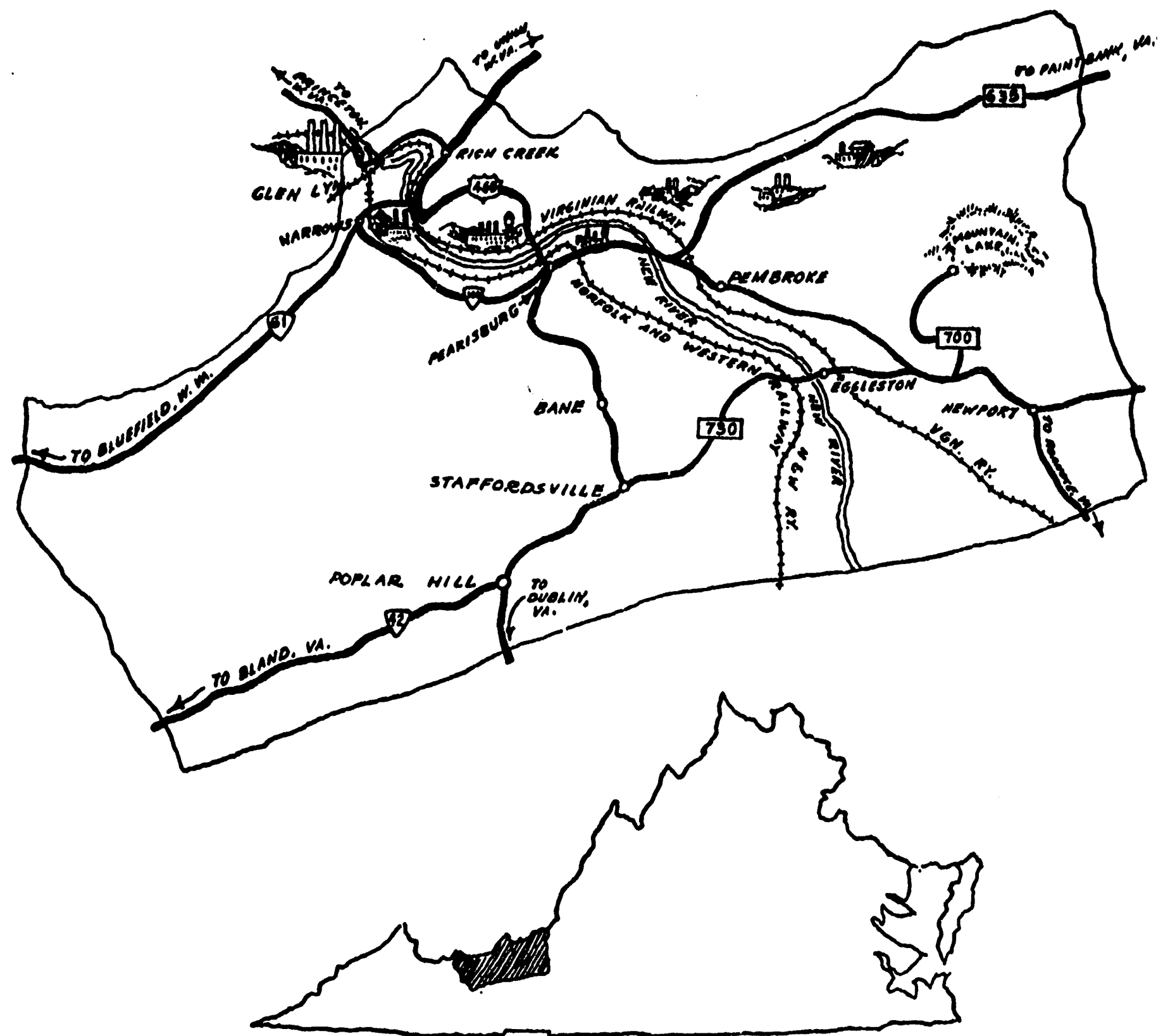


# Giles County Virginia

1806 - 1956







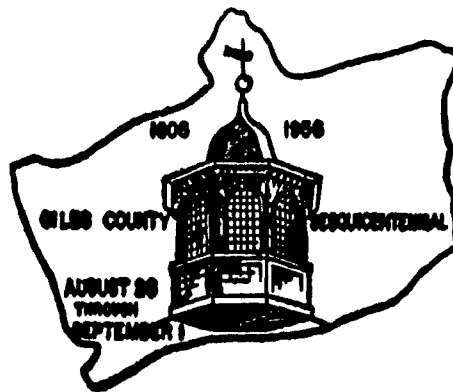
**GILES COUNTY, VIRGINIA**



1806  
GILES COUNTY  
1956

A Brief History by Robert C. Friend  
and others

EDITED BY EATON K. GOLDTHWAITE



PUBLISHED BY  
GILES COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
PEARISBURG, VIRGINIA

TABLE OF CONTENTS ON PAGE 46



## 1806 — GILES COUNTY — 1956

### FOREWORD

A student once asked an eminent historian why it was that, although most of the famous generals had written autobiographies, Robert E. Lee had never done so. The historian's reply: "General Lee was one of the few men who ever lived who had to offer neither apology nor excuse for anything he had done."

Neither apology nor excuse is offered for this History of Giles County, but certainly some explanation is due the reader for its many obvious shortcomings.

Preparing a history is not unlike building a house—it has to be completed before you can see what is wrong with it. In the present instance there has not been sufficient time to set wrong things to rights, nor to expand where necessary.

This work makes no claims to greatness; it is rather, a starting point at which some future historians, with more time and available knowledge, can begin.

Many persons, living and dead, have contributed to the little material which we have been able to gather here. The hand of fate—particularly in the form of fire—has hampered the efforts to probe the veil of the past. Disastrous fires have destroyed invaluable records in Newport, Pembroke, in the Courthouse at Pearisburg, and in Narrows, as though the past had foreseen our efforts and had moved to forestall us. Then, too, countless individual records—the fine, small stitching which brings the whole pattern to interesting life—have either been lost, inadvertently destroyed, or for personal reasons, withheld.

However it may be, we have compiled a history, and while due credit must and will be given to those historians whose published works have supplied us with source material, there is a group of "amateur" historians without whose efforts this work would have been impossible.

Foremost of these is Robert C. Friend, of Narrows, who spent many months collecting and organizing source material from which the background of this journal has been woven. If any single man, more than any other, may be credited with bringing this present work into being, it is Mr. Friend.

Then, among the others of the living, we must not overlook the contributions of Mrs. E. E. Woodson, Mrs. J. E. Givens, Miss Nell Hale, Mrs. K. S. French, Mr. George K. Shands, Mrs. Pauline Williams, Mr. C. R. Adair, Mr. Edward

Skidmore and Mrs. P. L. Killey, all of Narrows; Miss Nancy Pearson, Mr. Hugh S. Charlton, Mr. Roy Witten, Mr. D. W. Mason, Miss Carrie Williams, Mrs. W. B. Snidow, Mr. A. D. Gerberich, Mrs. C. A. McClaugherty, Sr., all of Pearisburg; Mr. Ralph Albert, of Trigg; Mr. Leo F. Goeller, and Miss Mattie Guthrie, of Ripplemead; Mr. Brackett Snidow, Mr. Mervin Williams and Mr. Chapman S. Hoge, of Pembroke; Mrs. Shannon Miller, of White Gate; Mr. and Mrs. Julius Johnston and Mr. C. Cook Eaton of Staffordsville; Mr. R. R. Horner, of the Norfolk and Western Railway; Mr. A. E. Suter, of the Virginian Railway, and Dr. Goodridge Wilson, regular staff columnist for The Roanoke Times.

Our special thanks also to Mr. J. Livingstone Dillow, whose counsel and encouragement were of invaluable aid, and to Mrs. Janice Prillaman, of the Virginian-Leader staff, for many hours of extra work in helping to prepare the material.

If we have committed the grave error of omission from this list, it has not been intentional and we apologize for it. As we have said, many persons have kindly assisted, either in directly supplying material or in telling us where it could be found.

Among those deceased, both by direct contribution of a post-humously published article and through association we are deeply indebted to the late William Bane Snidow, who, if he had been permitted to live these intervening years, would undoubtedly have filled many of the gaps which exist in this record.

Also, to F. N. Broderick, a British subject who, though dead these many years, faithfully reported the events in one of the most critical times in Giles County's history, and indirectly through the Charlton family supplied us with many of the priceless old photographs which have been reproduced herein.

Also, to T. S. Johnston and Pearson Johnston, father and son who conducted The Pearisburg Virginian over the longest unbroken span of its 99-year existence, recording the commonplace, day-to-day happenings of the community, which are the blood and sinew of history . . .

To each, and all of these, this work is respectfully and affectionately dedicated.

Eaton K. Goldthwaite, Editor

Reference Works: *Hardesty's History*, published in 1884; *History of the Middle New River Settlements*, (1908) by David E. Johnston; *An American Past*, by William B. Snidow; *History of Virginia*, (Six Volumes—1924) by Lyon Gardiner Tyler, President Emeritus of William and Mary.

### Newport

The name "Newport" is of English origin, and means a "new port," or portal, or place of entrance. Although ports are usually located on the sea or other large bodies of water, the name is still properly used in the case of Newport in Giles County, for a little over a hundred years ago it was a most important place of entrance to a vast frontier country.

Newport, the oldest incorporated Town in Giles County, was also at one time its largest and most bustling community, as well as being one of its most popular resort towns. In the year 1858 the railroad from Petersburg, connecting with New York, had penetrated as far as Dublin, and regularly operated stagecoach routes had been established via the Wilderness Road so that Newport was an important junction point. From this place, stage lines fanned out, with passengers, mail and freight being regularly carried to Craig Healing Springs and other points in Craig County; to the Great Salt Pond (which we know today as Mountain Lake) and over this road through



TOM JOHNSTON AND FAMILY . . .  
he Published The Virginian.



COVERED BRIDGE, NEWPORT

Kyre and Interior to Gray Sulphur Springs, Red and White Sulphur and other resorts and important points in West Virginia.

A road from Newport also connected Hoge's Store; Pembroke, and the Town of Pearisburg via Christian Snidow's ferry over the New River; there was also much activity at the White Sulphur Springs of New River, formerly Gunpowder Springs and now Eggleston; the center of much traffic and the central distributing point for considerable freight, Newport grew rapidly until it boasted several hotels, numerous stores and dwellings, a thriving bank and, during the course of events, two newspapers.

Elsewhere in this history will be found a newspaper article from the Pearisburg Gazette describing the dedication of a Masonic Hall at Newport in the year 1869, at which more than a thousand persons were in attendance. Although more than this number annually attend the Newport Fair, the crowd for that day is an indication of the importance that Newport occupied when the present-day metropoli of Pearisburg and Narrows were little more than sleepy hamlets.

Fire may not have altered the destiny of Newport, but it certainly hastened it; in 1901 practically every major building in the Town was destroyed, with only a handful being rebuilt.

Newport has contributed to the lore of Giles County in many ways; one of them is in an expression which has endured through the years. During the Civil War, when shortages were extreme and flour was almost impossible to obtain, John Tawney is said to have approached a dealer and requested flour, only to be told there was none to be had but that a shipment was expected the following week.

"That will be too late for Tawney," John is reputed to have replied, and *Too late for Tawney* became an idiom of the language.

Newport, even today, retains several outstanding features: Most communities, regardless of age, have not had a covered wooden bridge in many years—Newport has two, both in good repair and in regular use.

### **Hoge's Chapel**

Perhaps no finer reminder of the Old South exists anywhere in Southwest Virginia today than the magnificent plantation house, orchards and farm of the J. T. S. Hoge Estate at Hoge's Chapel. The house was built sometime between 1840 and 1850, supplanting a log house which had been orig-



OLD IRON FOUNDRY, NEWPORT

inally built by the Hoge family on migrating to the section from Wythe County. The plantation house, a masterpiece of Georgian design, was so solidly built that even its inner walls were of brick. An unusual feature, in use until recent years, was a brick pipe which brought water to the house from a spring on the mountain.

During the latter days of the Civil War, a company of Federal soldiers, passing along Mountain Lake road, endeavored to shell the mansion, but due to heavy mists in the valley their aim was poor. One cannon ball landed in the old log house, and numerous minny-balls fell around, but the mansion escaped.

It is legend that a courier reached the Federals and informed them that a superior Confederate force was at their heels; the Federals fled in complete disorganization after attempts to bury or hide their equipment. For years the section was a "happy hunting ground" for seekers of trophies.

There was reputed to be a very handsome brass cannon, heavily engraved, which had been presented to one of the Massachusetts Companies, either buried or hidden in a cave during the flight. The search of years, however, has failed to reveal it. Doubtless, somewhere on Salt Pond Mountain, this relic still rests.

### **Pembroke**

This settlement, one of the oldest in Giles County, with its reality titles traced directly from King's Grants, was named for the Earl of Pembroke. The Lybrook family settled in the Sinking Creek area, and there were almost wiped out by Indians; the Burks were their neighbors to the West; and the Snidows settled and built a fort in the vicinity of Horseshoe Curve. Descendants of these families still live in the Town, some of them occupying land which was originally granted to their ancestors nearly 300 years ago.

Mr. Brackett Snidow, a charming and widely educated gentleman, a direct descendant of Christian Snidow and other pioneers, is an authority on the history of Pembroke and has written several theses on the early days.

The oldest mercantile establishment in Giles County, Williams Bros. and Company, operated in Pembroke, has been in business continually for more than sixty years. In recent years, a spectacular and disastrous fire completely destroyed the old store which had been several times remodeled and expanded; despite this setback and a staggering financial loss, the firm re-established itself across the street from the



HOGE MANSION, HOGE'S CHAPEL

old location and is today one of Giles County's leading business houses.

Pembroke, with its numerous stores, a branch of the Bank of Giles County, and its excellent central school with a new ultra-modern cafeteria and community center, has this year set out to establish a community park on Stony Creek. Pembroke's churches, of several denominations, include some of the oldest in the area. Not content to dwell in its past history, the Town is looking to the future, for it has within its borders some of the best undeveloped industrial sites remaining in the County.

### Rich Creek

Although one of the newest and most rapidly growing Towns in Giles County, Rich Creek in point of historical fact and importance stands among the oldest. A part of the territory annexed from West Virginia to form Giles County, it was near Lurich on the edge of Rich Creek that the original expedition of Batt and Fallam, out of Fort Petersburg, came to an end on September 17, 1671 when their Indian guides refused to go further.

It was near this place that the group burned their initials on trees and claimed the territory in the name of King Charles, II, of England.

One of the earliest mills of the area was established by Christian Peters on the bank of Rich Creek near the edge of the present town territory; one of the oldest log houses in the region was recently removed from the Ould property to make way for a modern motel.

Rich Creek, a thriving modern metropolis with its own bank, theatre and business section, is a small city of pleasant homes, churches, a central school building and ample room for expansion, with available industrial sites at its door.

### Glen Lyn

Glen Lyn, the gateway to West Virginia's billion dollar coal fields, is believed to be the site of the earliest settlement in Giles County, and as such is mentioned elsewhere in this text. It is also the site of the giant Appalachian Electric Power Company's generating plant; by proportion of assessed valuation to population, Glen Lyn is one of the richest communities in the world.

It is, as might be expected, a Town of sharp contrasts: within the shadows of the world's largest outdoor boiler, which generates electricity from coal more efficiently than it has

ever been done before; one of the world's highest smokestacks and railroad bridges—within the area of this testament of the ingenuity of modern engineering stands the oldest house in Giles County, and also lies a grave, simply marked: *Mary Porter, killed by the Indians.*

### Pearisburg Fire Department

Although Pearisburg has existed as a Town since 1808, it was not until 1944 that a fire department was organized in the Fort Branch section, adopting as its name Liberty Fire Company No. 1. At the same time, a fire department was operating in Pearisburg under Civilian Defense, and on January 22, 1945, following the request of Councilman C. J. Taylor, the two companies were consolidated as The Pearisburg Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.

Kent Pennington was named the first Chief of the newly consolidated department, and C. J. Taylor was named president. The equipment on hand consisted of a 1936 Ford pickup truck with an OCD pumper; 500 feet of 2½" hose; 300 feet of 1½" hose; a ladder, axe and four nozzles.

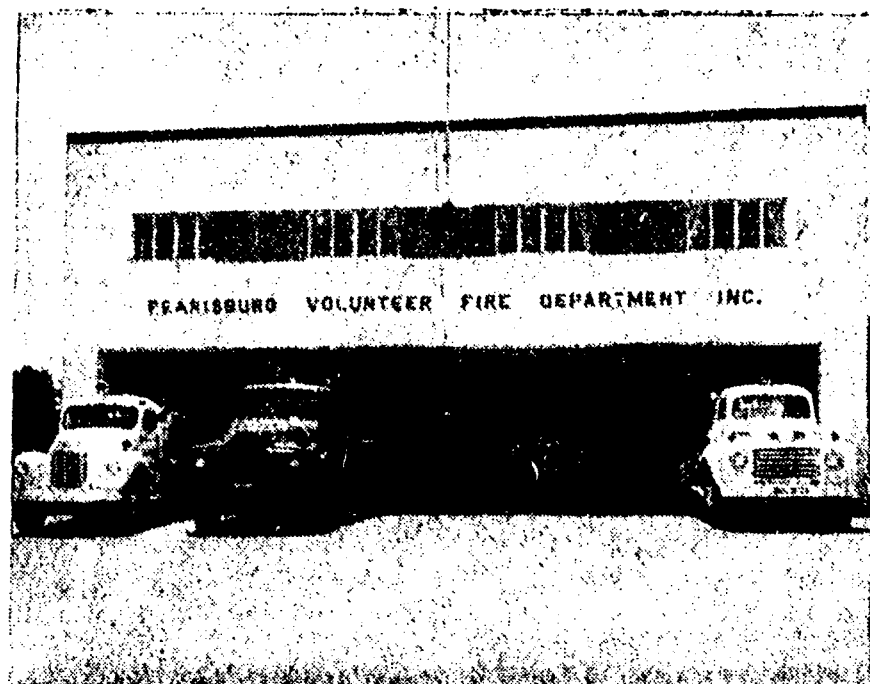
In May, 1945, C. J. Taylor resigned to run for Mayor of Pearisburg, and Merel B. Pennington was elected to succeed him as president of the company. During 1945 the Fire Department and Town Council sponsored construction of a new Town reservoir with 750,000 gallon capacity.

On April 21st, 1946, Chief Carl Ray resigned and Kent Pennington was elected to replace him. During the year delegations were sent to neighboring towns to study equipment and operations, and on August 23 a contract was signed for construction of a new fire truck, which was completed and ready for service in September, 1947.

The next equipment was added in January, 1949, when an American LaFrance Torpedo truck with a 350 gal. per min. rotary geared pump was purchased from the Town of Radford for the sum of \$250.

An epidemic of fires in the first months of 1949 brought about the necessity of additional equipment, and with the help of the Giles County Board of Supervisors a '49 model Studebaker 1½ ton chassis was purchased; a fire truck body was placed on the chassis, and in 1950 this truck was sent to Charlotte, N. C. for conversion into the modern fire-fighting equipment which is still in service.

February 11, 1950, the Department purchased a Ford panel ½ ton truck which has been equipped with 3-way Link



PEARISBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT



RIPPLEMEAD UNION SUNDAY SCHOOL—ABOUT 1908

radio, S-C public address system; 2 stretchers; asbestos suit; portable 120 gpm pump; portable 60 gpm pump; rescusitator, blankets, first-aid kit and large tool box.

On August 22, 1951, the Fire Department purchased a lot on Mountain Lake Avenue and started construction of the new fire house on Sept. 21. Dedication of the building took place on April 14, 1952.

On January 2, 1954, an American LaFrance 65-ft. aerial truck was purchased to supplement the City service truck which had been in use over a year.

In April, 1954, a 3-story addition to the fire station was begun to furnish accommodations for kitchen, equipment and storage, completing the modern 11 room, 3 toilet station which is now in use.

In its ten years of existence the Department has answered an average of 38 alarms annually; is now housed in its fifth location, and has on hand the tenth piece of mobile equipment, five of which are still in service. Members are each insured with \$3,000 life, health and accident policy; are furnished rain coats, helmets, boots, gloves and both formal and semi-formal dress uniforms. The Department is financed partly by Giles County, partly by the Town of Pearisburg, and the balance through its own projects.

Present officers are Kent Pennington, Chief; Marvin Dunford, Assistant Chief; Henry Wade, Captain; Lieutenants Bud Hale, W. H. Melvey, George Donovan and C. W. Wilburn. Administrative officers are James Goodwin, President; K. A. Crawford, 1st Vice Pres.; Clayton Davis, 2nd Vice Pres.; Kyle E. Burke, Sec.; James Kerrigan, Treas.; L. J. Shelton, Jr., Purchasing Agent, and James Johnston, Building Mgr.

Following an inspection made by the Board of Fire Underwriters on Tuesday, July 24, 1956, the Department was given the top rating which can be received by any volunteer fire department, a remarkable accomplishment and one worthy of the community's gratitude and appreciation.

## Churches of Pearisburg

### THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Presbyterian met at Giles Court House April 26, 1850. In this meeting there is the following minute:

"A petition from sundry persons residing in the county of Giles was presented to Presbytery, praying that they might be organized into a church to be known by the name of the Church of Pearisburg, which petition was on motion granted and the Revs. Messrs. Ewing and Payne were appointed a committee to organize the church during the present meeting of Presbytery. Thanks were returned to the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the use of their building."

At the spring meeting of Presbytery in 1861, Daniel R. Cecil, elder from Pearisburg Church, asked for aid for a building to be erected and \$300 were asked of the board of Church Extension for that purpose.

The Federal Forces commanded by Col. R. B. Hayes of Ohio, later president of the U. S., used this church as a commissary from May 6, to 10, 1863. The Yankees were driven out of the town by a small body of Confederates commanded by Brig. Gen. Heath. As they retreated they set fire to the Church, but thanks to the brave women of the town the fire was quickly extinguished.

The church building was entirely destroyed by fire on the night of Dec. 25, 1869, after it had just been completed and dedicated the month before.

### CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Christ Episcopal Church, Pearisburg, was organized in November 1907.

The first church building was erected in 1910, and services were first held in the church about May or June, 1912. The first visit of the Bishop to the church was on Nov. 9, 1912, at which time Bishop Tucker confirmed two members, Miss Carrie Williams and Mrs. William Gibboney.

The original building was burned on the night of March 26, 1926, and plans were immediately made to rebuild on the

MAIN STREET  
IN THE 80's  
The Virginian office is on  
the right, about where  
Witten's Men's Store  
now stands



same site, and enlarge the building some.

The present building was consecrated on April 8, 1933, by Bishop Robert C. Jett, the full amount of all indebtedness having been paid off by Messrs. M. P. Lawrence and P. Lugin, of Glen Lyn.

The memorial window in the rear of the chancel was put in by the late Judge James French Strother in honor of his parents, Judge and Mrs. P. W. Strother.

#### BAPTIST CHURCH

The Baptist church was founded in 1879, and the building was opened in 1882. Arminta D. French gave the land for the Baptist Church. Mrs. F. G. Thrasher gave the land for the parsonage, a part of which was sold to J. W. Walker and the money was put into the building of the parsonage. Rev. M. F. Wilson was the first pastor. The present building, erected in 1937, was dedicated by Dr. Walter P. Binns, pastor of the First Baptist church, Roanoke.

#### METHODIST CHURCH

The Methodists were organized at Pearisburg in 1809 or 1810 by Jacob Peck. The class leader was named Beuford. Services were held in a log school house that stood on the public school ground opposite and near the present residence of Mrs. C. A. Hoilman. Services were also held in the stone Court House which stood near the site of the present Court House. After the log structure was replaced by the brick building, Pearisburg Academy, (now the Masonic building), services were held there.

In 1847 the Methodists built a frame church, the first church erected in Pearisburg. In 1859 this building was torn down to make way for a brick building. This church was dedicated April 7, 1861. James D. Johnston, Sr., a prominent member of this church, states in his journal that on the day of the dedication, as he was leaving the church after services, Wilkinson Witten of Tazewell rode up from the direction of Dublin and announced that Fort Sumpter had been fired upon.

Miss Betty Lee Pearson and James B. Hale were married in this church October 23, 1889. This was the first church wedding solemnized in Pearisburg.

This brick building was torn down and replaced by the present church in 1896.

#### JUDGE MARTIN WILLIAMS

Judge Martin Williams was born in Pittsylvania county in September, 1858, son of Robert and Elizabeth (Martin) Williams. His father was a large farmer and tobacco manufacturer; his mother a daughter of Col. Joseph Martin of Henry County, who was son of General Joseph Martin, a pioneer in Indian Affairs in southwest Virginia, western North Carolina and Tennessee.

His early life saw the devastation of War and Reconstruction, and the almost complete dissipation of his father's fortune, and his only means of education was in the "old field schools". At 17 years of age he followed his older brother, late Attorney General Samuel W. Williams, to Bland County, where he worked at odd jobs until he went to Blacksburg in 1878 and worked for two years in the shops to pay his board. Leaving college, he returned to Bland County where he read law with his brother, was admitted to the bar when 21, took summer law at the University in 1882, and was Commonwealth's Attorney of Bland County. In 1892 he was elected Judge of the county courts of Giles and Bland counties, served his term, declined re-election and resumed his practice, having moved to Giles County.

He served on the Board of World's Fair Managers for the State of Virginia at the World's Fair at Chicago in 1893. Was elected to the Legislature from Giles and Bland in 1906, served ten years in succession, was floor leader six years; was a member of the sub-committee which reported a complete revision of the public school laws, which report was adopted at the session of 1906; piloted the Mann High School Bill through the House, thus establishing the first state high schools in Virginia; was the author of the Williams School Bill authorizing the borrowing from the literary fund, under which nearly all of the splendid school buildings in Virginia have been built; was one of the first opponents of the idea of issuing bonds for the building of public roads, fought the idea continually from 1910, in and out of the Legislature, until its final defeat; was the author of the Williams Enabling Act, under which the State voted dry, and in that Canvass, stumped the state from the Kentucky line to Norfolk at his own expense.

During the administration of Gov. Stuart he was on a special committee along with the late Frank Buchanan and





WENONAH AVENUE, PEARISBURG, DATE UNKNOWN—Effects of the Civil War may be seen in the glass of the Courthouse cupola, which is still boarded up. The building on the corner of Main Street is the old Woolwine Hotel.

others, to report on the revision of the tax laws of Virginia, thus laying the foundation for the plan of segregation which was completed after his retirement from the Legislature, his retirement being voluntary.

He perhaps had to his credit more constructive legislation than any one man from Virginia.

He was appointed by President Wilson as explosive inspector for Virginia during World War I. After this he was elected Commonwealth's Attorney for Giles County for one term but declined re-election.

He was a member of the Masonic Lodge, an Odd Fellow, and an elder in the Presbyterian Church.

#### PEARISBURG POST OFFICE

The post office in Pearisburg was established as Giles Court House, Giles County, Virginia, on January 9, 1811. The name of the office was changed to Pearisburg on January 27, 1854. On an unknown date the name was changed to *Pearisburgh*. On January 26, 1893, it was changed back to Pearisburg again.

#### OLD DWELLINGS

1814 — Lot 4 (old Methodist parsonage) Old Court House Lot. 1814 David Summers bought this lot. In 1821 he sold it to Ralph Stafford and William Henderson. In 1832 the building there was called Old Court House.

1811 — Lot 40 (Dr. J. A. Booth house) was sold to David Price by Henry E. Smith, attorney for the town. In 1815 Price sold it to David and Andrew Johnston. In 1819 Andrew Johnston sold it to David Johnston. At this time there was a stone house on it. Chapman I Johnston bought it in 1844,

and sold it to George Hoge in 1850. The Charltons bought it from the Hoges and they sold it to the Prices. Col. Pendleton kept a store in one room at one time. Others who lived there were Mat Peters, Frank Hale, Jesse Woodrum. C. L. King had a bank in part of the house.

1813 — Lot 38, bought by John, Jacob and Benjamin Peck (Shelton house back of bank). In 1832 William C. Charlton's tailor shop was protruding on the southeast of this lot. The present house is built from lumber taken from the former dwelling house of Charles Woolwine—probably a part of which was erected by John Anderson, prominent merchant in the 1860's, 70's and 80's.

1827 — Lot 30 (Thomas Building) "Leave is given Guy D. French in 1827 to take earth from the public square and street in this town and mold and burn into brick for the erection of a brick house." The dwelling was erected that year. In the 1860's it was known as the Western Hotel. In 1868 H. B. Barbour was proprietor. In 1869 both taverns were closed "because the Court wouldn't grant liquor license." In May 1869 Mr. Barbour opened the Woodrum or Central Hotel, and in June 1869 Mrs. G. D. French reopened the Western Hotel.

This building was owned over forty-four years by Thomas J. Pearson. He occupied it 18 years as a dwelling, rented it as a hotel and store for a few years, and later used it as a store for his merchandise.

1829 — (Dr. H. G. Johnston House) built by Andrew Johnston, grandfather of the late Dr. H. G. Johnston, in 1829. This is the only house in the town occupied by three generations consecutively.



(ABOVE) MAIN STREET, PEARISBURG IN THE EARLY 80'S

(BELOW) GENERAL VIEW OF THE TOWN AT THE SAME PERIOD





DR. HARVEY JOHNSTON'S OFFICE  
used as headquarters by Col. Rutherford B. Hayes



OLD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
and Manse, on Main Street, Pearisburg

#### POPULATION OF PEARISBURG FROM 1880—1930

1880 —	285
1890 —	391
1900 —	464
1910 —	470
1920 —	537
1930 —	668

#### TAVERNS — 1812

The following rates were to be observed by Ordinary Keepers (eating and lodging houses):

West India rum, per half pint .....	25	cts
New York rum per half pint .....	12½	cts
Whiskey per half pint .....	9	cts
Cider per quart .....	9	cts
Beer .....	9	cts
Dinner .....	25	cts
Breakfast .....	25	cts
Supper .....	25	cts
Lodging .....	12½	cts
Corn, per gallon .....	12½	cts
Oats, per gallon .....	12½	cts
Hay or fodder, per night .....	17	cts
Pasture, per night .....	9	cts
First quality of imported wine, per half pint .....	25	cts
Second rate of imported wine, per half pint .....	15	cts
Continental wine, per half pint .....	12½	cts

#### BANKS OF PEARISBURG

The Pearisburg Savings Bank was chartered by an Act of the General Assembly, March 30, 1852. Apparently this bank was never organized, for on March 15, 1856, an act of the General Assembly was passed establishing a branch bank of the Old Dominion at Pearisburg.

A. G. Pendleton was President and William Vass was cashier. Its first home was in the dwelling house of Mr. Foote. This house later became the property of Thomas C. Johnston, editor of the Pearisburg Virginian. The house was razed several years ago, and the site is now a part of the public square. A brick structure was built for the bank. It joined

the court house on the northwest side. This building was torn down and the Confederate monument now stands near its site.

In 1898 C. L. King had a bank in one of the rooms in the Dr. J. A. Booth house. Later the brick building, the old home of the Pearisburg Virginian, was the bank building. From this building it was moved to its present location.

#### EARLY SCHOOLS OF GILES COUNTY AND PEARISBURG

From the records of the State Board of Education contained in the report of Superintendent of Public Instruction for the year 1870 there was found to be thirty schools open. There was no report on private schools.

In 1871-72 there were four school districts in Giles with the following number of schools in each: Walker's Creek 8, Pearisburg 11, Pembroke 7, and Newport 4. This report states that the county school board owned none of the school buildings and that "our means at present are too limited to justify the boards to attempt their erection."

James B. Peck was superintendent of schools in Giles at that time.

A report of 1870 states that there were two private schools, one at White Gate, run by the Rev. James Humphreys. It had two faculty members, a man and a woman. It was organized in 1868. There was also a private school at Pearisburg, run by D. J. Chapman.

From interviews with people who lived in Pearisburg at this time, and who attended these schools it was learned that Prof. Chanceleum, a Frenchman, who married a sister of D. J. Chapman and Mrs. English, ran a private school in the old Academy. After the death of Prof. Chanceleum, Mrs. Chanceleum taught in her home, using two rooms. Her home was the house which is now owned by Mrs. C. A. Hoilman.

Later a school was opened in the Woodrum Hotel, taught by Mrs. Woodrum, mother of the late Jesse Woodrum of Pearisburg.



HIGH STREET, PEARISBURG ABOUT 1880



PEARISBURG VIRGINIAN—SITE OF PRESENT WITTEN'S STORE



CHARLTON'S STORE



IN 1880, WHERE KROGER'S &amp; VIRGINIA GARAGE NOW STAND

The earliest public school seems to have been located in the northern part of town on the road leading to Curve opposite the Dr. H. G. Johnston family cemetery.

According to the diary of James D. Johnston, Sr., there was a log school house on the public school ground, near or on the site of, the Masonic Hall as early as 1809 or 1810.

1825 — On application of the citizens of Pearisburg for leave to build a school house on the public lot which is set apart for the purpose of building a church on or house of divine worship. The Court in accordance with the wishes of the citizens of Pearisburg, gives them leave to build the school house on the public lot and to occupy the same for 10 years as a house of tuition.

April 26, 1831 — Landon Duncan (on the motion of Wm. Chapman) has leave to teach school in the Court House for the term of two months, the said Duncan when he enters upon the duties of his school, he shall examine the Court House and when his term expires shall also view the same and should any damage be sustained by occasion thereof the employers are to pay the same.

From Deed Book E, page 457:

David Hall to the trustees of Pearisburg Academy October 26, 1839, \$15.00 one half of the lot of ground belonging

to the County of Giles situated in the town of Pearisburg being the same lot that the Court many years ago set apart for the purpose of erecting thereon a Church and school house which half intended to be sold in the western end off the said lot and adjoining a lot of ground belonging to Rufus A. French the said David Hall in making the said consequences is especially required to grant the said piece of ground to the association aforesaid for the purpose of erecting an Academy thereon but for no other purpose.

Masonic Female Institute, President Daniel W. Mason, located one mile from Pearisburg was opened Sept. 21, 1893, and continued until 1900. When it closed the faculty was composed of eight or ten college graduates and had a boarding department of about thirty students.

The Grammar School was erected in 1908. The total cost of the building was \$8,467.19, and of the lot \$915.00, making it a total cost of \$9,382.19. Of this total the School Board paid \$5,960. and \$3,522.19 was raised by subscriptions. The contributions ranged in amounts from \$10 to \$300. The bell was contributed by the Rev. Bolling Hobson, Presbyterian minister.

The building committee was composed of C. L. King and Bernard Mason. James R. Stafford was the first principal.

## ***The Years 1868-69 Were of Vital Importance to Giles County—***

The years of 1868-69 were of vital importance to Giles County because they marked the beginning of a new era. The County, along with the rest of the Dominion, had been under military occupation since the end of the Civil War; the entire South, crushed and bewildered, was trying desperately to pull itself together. Because of the isolation of Giles County, and the peculiarly independent nature of its people—also the fact that it had suffered little damage from the war—this area was among the first to find a “new direction”. Shortages had begun to ease, and a normal way of life was beginning again.

The Pearisburg Gazette, forerunner of The Virginian-Leader, had been established in 1857 and, because of the War, was forced to suspend. In 1867 the newspaper was in operation again, with John Sower as publisher. The following articles, taken from the Gazette issues of dates as shown, are historically significant and form the only record we have for the period:

### *April 5, 1869*      **THE CLERKSHIP**

As we stated in our last, Wm. K. Brooks was appointed clerk of both Courts for this county, and his commission arrived on the 25th ultimo; and just as we went to press, we noticed that George W. Porterfield had, on the 25th, been appointed clerk of the Circuit Court for this county, which we thought probably a blunder at headquarters, as Brooks already had the commission as clerk of both Courts; but on Thursday last Porterfield's commission came, and we now have two appointees as clerk of the Circuit Court, and the question is, Who is the clerk? Both men are appointed “To fill the vacancy caused by the removal of H. W. Broderick.”

*Sept. 4, 1869*

### **THE WABASH CAMP-MEETING**

Commenced on the 4th, and closed on the 9th, instant. There were seventeen Ministers and an unusually large number of persons in attendance. On Sunday, the crowd was variously estimated at from 1,500 to 2,500. One man from Montgomery, was arrested on Sunday for attempting to get up a row and in default of security for his good behaviour, was sent to jail. Another man, from this county, was arrested on Sunday night for selling liquor on the ground. A canteen of whiskey was found on his person and a measuring cup in his pocket. He was required to give security for his good behavior. With these two exceptions, everything passed off quietly. Some sixty or seventy professed conversion, and thirty or forty connected themselves with the Church.

### *Aug. 17, 1868*      **OUR THIRD VOLUME**

The present issue forms the first number of the third volume of the Gazette. With it we start upon another, the third year, since the revival of the paper after the close of the late war.

The period of its reconstructed existence has been one uncommonly eventful. Unfortunately it has been crowded with events entirely of a depressing and dispiriting character. A deep gloom—an almost total despondency—has been cast upon our people. Left, by the result of the war, completely destitute, they have, by the current of legislation, and the usurpations of irresponsible officials, been denied that stimulus to exertion, and that incentive to effort, proceeding from a feeling of security to the rights of person and property, which it is the great aim of a good and stable government to furnish, and which renders such a government a blessing to its people. As if this were not enough, as if the paralyzing of every energy by the uncertainties of a threatening future were not sufficient, there has been added by reckless and wanton extravagance and outrage a burden of debt and taxation so enormous as to cripple every interest, and clog the wheels of

industry. As a consequence trade of every kind has languished, enterprise has been almost abandoned, and in place of the thrift and plentiful prosperity with which the land was once blessed, a timid and apathetic routine of “living from hand to mouth” has very generally been substituted.

In looking back over this period - recalling the gloomy prospect that met us at the start, and recollecting the continuous discouragements that have since crowded each other in the march of events,—we cannot let the occasion pass without expressing our thanks for the patronage that has enabled us to reach this point. Humble as has been our career, we are not insensible of our obligations to our friends for the support that has successfully carried us through two such years. That we have done our best, with our limited means, to merit this support, will, we think, be readily conceded by our patrons; that we have not done all that we hoped to do, that we have not fulfilled our own aspiration, or fully met our own expectations, we most frankly admit; but now, when the skies around us are brightening, when every day brings us additional evidences that the great mass of the people, North and West, are becoming aroused to the real condition of the country, and indicating their purpose to remove a blighting incubus that has so long and so heavily weighed upon the energies of the people, we may surely hope - so confidently hope as to base thereon a promise - that we shall be able to double our claims to the support of our patrons; and, as the two are a sort of mutual cause and effect - operating, as it were, in a circle - we may also hope to receive, in the future, a double measure of support.

As we intimated last week we intend to commence this third year with a greater effort to place our journal on a broader and surer basis than we have hitherto been able to make. No exertion within our means shall be omitted to render it successful, and we are encouraged to hope for a full measure of success both from the achievements of the past amid its gloom and discouragement, and from the improved prospect that seems to be opening before us. It is needless to present our intentions in detail. Circumstances will, of course, largely influence them, and by them we must be guided; but the result of our effort will at once be manifest to all.

Much of error exists among our country friends in regard to the business of conducting a country newspaper. Crude notions that, in some way, or other, it is an inexhaustible source of wealth very extensively prevail. A little reflection would convince our patrons how far they are from the truth, and demonstrate that the appearance and merit of a local journal are a sure gauge of the support and influence it receives. With these erroneous ideas prevailing it is not astonishing that the local journal often fails to meet the expectations of the community. To some it is too small, to others, it has too little variety, to many, it lacks ability in the editorial chair; while to all, accustomed to these various complaints it becomes rather an object of contempt. With this point reached there can be little hope of improvement, and but little prospect other than a speedy and miserable death. And this state of things arises from a failure to consider that it is an patronage that makes the local journal interesting and effective, no less than that an interesting paper challenges and draws support.

The circulation of a county paper is usually so limited, that, were there not a single delinquent subscriber, the whole subscription list would not secure the services of a man of ability as Editor. Were it however barely sufficient, and so expended, nothing remains for the compositor, the paper or any other of the many expenses necessary to keep up publication. Again, the advertising portion of the business, that is so lucrative to our city contemporaries, dwindles in the country office to absolute insignificance.

We mention these things merely to show the necessity for an intelligent support of the local paper, if the community

would have it an object of pride and credit, as well as a source of pleasure and instruction to themselves. Promising our best efforts to remedy these evils, we call upon our friends to second us manfully in our labors. Let every subscriber not only renew his own subscription at once but furnish us with another. Advocate the claims of your local journal. Take an interest in it, and let that interest be shown. Solicit subscriptions to it in your neighborhood, and elsewhere, and persevere until not a single man of your acquaintance fails to take it. Do this and we promise most faithfully to return you your money's worth. Given us a subscription list that will pay an Editor of ability, and we will sacredly appropriate the means to secure the services of a man competent, for the work, and who will devote his time and talent to it. Meet us with a vigorous effort in our support, and the paper shall no longer be too small. Come up to our aid with a will, and with a will we will work to remedy every defect in the *Gazette*.

No better time could we select to make the effort we intend, or the appeal we now make. The tide is turning, take it at the flood. Exert yourselves at once, and learn how easy it is to accomplish great changes by a little effort, when unitedly made. Don't fail to send us your name as a subscriber for the next year, and at least one name more; and on our return from our projected trip you shall see the result of your work.

Aug. 17, 1868

WESTERN HOTEL,  
Giles Court House, Va.  
H. B. BARBOR, Proprietor

This old and popular house has been opened to the public. The Table will at all times be furnished with the best the country affords; the Bar with the choicest Liquors that can be procured, and the Stables well supplied with Grain and Hay. Bills moderate.

Aug. 24, 1868

#### DIED

On Sugar Run, in this county, on the 14th instant, Mrs. JEMINA FARLEY, consort of Kiser Farley, in the 66th year of his age. She was taken with a pain in the head, and did not live five minutes.

At the Western Hotel, in this place, on the 19th instant, of paralysis, Mrs. JOHN C. LAW, of Franklin county, Va.

#### NOTICE

The Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of the New River Navigation Company will be held at New River White S. Springs, on Saturday, 5th of September next. It is desirable that all stockholders should be represented in person or by proxy.

#### TO THE PUBLIC

The undersigned having divested himself of all encumbrances, is now prepared to give his whole attention to the building business . . . Houses, Mills and Bridges will receive his personal attention. He flatters himself that his thorough knowledge of the theory of building will enable him to give entire satisfaction.

Coffins made in the best style at short notice. Prices moderate and terms liberal.

JAS. T. HOBACK  
Architect and Builder

An exchange says narrow shoes with high heels, which are now all the fashion, are serious obstacles to a good figure. Without a good basis it is impossible to sustain the form in an erect posture, and poised, as our young girls are, upon the stilts of fashion, it is not easy to preserve their equilibrium. They thus habitually bend forward or backward, to the right or to the left, until, in the course of time, they become per-

manently misshapen in one direction or the other. And this is not all. The heels of fashionable shoes worn by ladies are so small at the bottom as to afford little or no support to the ankles. This in part accounts for the peculiar walk of those who wear them, and this is causing many weak and sprained ankles, for which there is no cure. An ankle once sprained is ever after liable to be injured by a very slight cause. No lady who values her comfort in life, and her limbs upon which she depends for locomotion, will wear high heels tapered off as is now the fashion.

Sept. 7, 1868

#### School in Pearisburg

It affords us great pleasure to announce the fact that we are at last to have a good school established in our town. It will be seen by reference to our advertising columns, that Mrs. S. M. McComas will open a school here sometime this month, and we earnestly call upon our citizens to sustain the school. Long have we needed such an institution, and now, that we have it in our power, let us go to work in earnest and establish a permanent school in our midst. Mrs. McComas is a lady of fine education, and one worthy of, and entitled to, the support and encouragement of the community. Due notice will be given of the time of commencement.

ad:

MRS. S. M. McCOMAS will open a school in Pearisburg during the latter part of the present month. As she has not yet circulated a Prospectus, she takes this method of soliciting the patronage of the community. She is ready to take charge of a few music pupils.

Oct. 19, 1868

#### CHURCH DEDICATION

We learn that the Presbyterian Church at this place will be dedicated on the second Sunday (8th day) of November.

Oct. 26, 1868

It is estimated that the loss to this county in the destruction of tobacco by the frost on the 9th instant, will amount to at least \$30,000.

In digging out the foundation for the new jail at this place, the workmen came to some rock, which they found it necessary to blast; and on Thursday last they put in one blast, but the fuse burned out without exploding. Issac A. Smith and Boston Bailey then attempted to drill out the powder, using a steel drill—when the powder exploded, knocking Smith down, and tearing Bailey's right hand (with which he was holding the drill) very much; his fore finger being broken, as also some of the bones in his hand. It was fortunate they were not killed.

On Thursday night last a Council of the Friends of Temperance was organized at this place. The following are the officers elect for the ensuing year: A. Mahood, President; W. A. Anderson, Associate; Rev. H. T. Darnall, Chaplain; J. W. Williams, Sec'y; F. W. Mahood, Financial Sec'y.; H. G. Johnston, Treas.; F. P. Mahood, Conductor; J. T. Grigby, Asso. Conductor; W. McClagherty, Inside Sent.; L. M. Woolwine, Outside Sent.

Nov. 9, 1868

The Presbyterian church at this place has been finished, and preaching commenced in it last Friday night.

Nov. 16, 1868

The Presbyterian church at this place was dedicated on Sunday last. The dedicatory sermon was preached by Rev. Mr. Hooper, of Christiansburg.

Dec. 7, 1868

On Sunday night last, Company G 2d U. S. Infantry, Capt. McLoughlin, which has for some time been stationed at Danville, Ky., quartered in the Court House at this place. They were armed with the Prussian Needle Gun, and en route to Union, W. Va., to relieve Company K 29th Infantry. On Friday Company K passed through en route to Texas, whither the regiment has been ordered.

Dec. 14, 1868

#### DIED

About the 1st inst., at Cotton Hill, Fayette county, W. Va., Mr. JOHN S. EASLEY, in the 76th year of his age. Mr. Easley was formerly a citizen of Giles, where he leaves a large circle of friends and acquaintances to mourn his departure from earth. He lived respected and beloved by all who knew him.

1869

Jan. 11, 1869

We learn that the freedmen have let to contract the building of a church in this place. Mr. Andrew Fillinger is the contractor, and the work is to be completed by the first of April.

Feb. 1 1869

Sinking Creek Lodge, No.—, A. F. and A. M., intend laying the corner-stone of the Masonic Hall at Newport, on the 12th instant. It is expected that Wor. H. W. Broderick will deliver the address upon that occasion.

Feb. 15, 1869

On Friday last Sinking Creek Lodge, A. F. and A. M., laid the corner stone of a new Masonic Hall at Newport. The Lodge met at 10½ o'clock, a procession formed at eleven and marched to the church, where they were addressed by Wor. H. W. Broderick.

Mr. B's address was eloquent, feeling, and deeply interesting, not only to the members of the Craft, but to the entire audience. He was followed by Rev. P. S. Suttor, who delivered a short and appropriate address, in which he full sustained his high reputation as a speaker. The procession was then re-formed and marched to the site of the new Hall and laid the corner-stone with the interesting and imposing ceremonies peculiar to Masonry; after which they marched back to the Hall and partook of a sumptuous dinner provided by the Lodge. The crowd present was estimated at about a thousand, and though so large, everything passed off quietly, and the most kindly feelings seemed to pervade the entire assembly. We did not see a solitary man intoxicated, or one who had even indulged in a single drink, (in fact we never saw nor heard of any liquor in the place), which speaks well for the citizens of the town and neighborhood. At the request of the Lodge, Wor. Broderick consented to furnish a copy of his address for publication, which we hope to have the pleasure of laying before our readers next week.

Feb. 15, 1869

#### VALUABLE MILL PROPERTY FOR SALE

The undersigned, contemplating removing from the country, offers for sale, privately, his Mill, known as the WABASH MILL, situate on the Pulaski and Giles Turnpike, 9½ miles from Giles C. H., and 11½ mi. from Dublin. The Mill is in excellent condition, has a good run of custom, and is located on a never-failing and never-freezing stream, and has four acres of good land attached.

Persons desiring to purchase will be given any necessary information by applying, either in person or by letter, to the undersigned. Address Poplar Hill, Giles county, Va.

ALLEN M. BANE

Feb. 15, 1869

#### MARRIED

On the 31st Dec., by Rev. J. M. Humphreys, Mr. George R. Surface and Miss Annie E. Shelton.

On the 2d inst., by the same, Mr. Miles A. Francis and Miss Cynthia M. Bane.

Mar 1, 1869

#### CIVIL APPOINTMENTS BY THE MILITARY

Surveyors - Giles - John W. Johnson

Magistrates - Giles - W. H. Dulaney, Jacob H. Sands, Peter Meadows, William Stewart, Thomas Hobbs, William Moser.

Overseers of the Poor - John Martin, A. J. Holiman

Mar. 8, 1869

The following is the list of appointments of Magistrates for this county so far as received up to this time:

Wm. H. Dulaney vice Wm. Bane, J. H. Sands vice Wm. B. Allen, Peter Meadows vice W. D. Straley, Wm. Stewart vice G. H. Dills, John H. Ryan vice R. F. Watts, Forest Farley vice G. H. Peck, Wm. Moser vice C. I. Thompson.

We understand that the appointments of Wm. H. Dulaney and John H. Ryan have been returned - they refusing to take the "iron-clad."

from March 22, 1869

#### THE OLDEST MASON

We have for some time noticed a succession of paragraphs setting forth the claims of various sections to the possession of the oldest Mason. Some very venerable brethren have been thus brought to light; but we think Giles can beat all yet brought forward. An old and much esteemed resident of our county, Mr. DAVID EATON, we think is the oldest living Mason. He was born in Ireland, but does not know his exact age. He has however three diplomas, a Blue Lodge, Chapter, and Knight Templar. They all bear date in 1802, the year that Mr. Eaton emigrated. The Knight Templar diploma states that he became a Knight Templar on the 7th of February, 1790—a little over 79 years ago. He cannot remember how long he had been a Mason before he became a Knight Templar, but he thinks eight or ten years. Say eight years, and he has been a Mason 87 years; and, as he must have been 21 years old at his initiation, he is now 108 years of age.

This aged patriarch is now exceedingly feeble, but, until the last year or two, possessed a wonderful degree of vigor. Although he had passed nearly an ordinary lifetime without entering a Lodge—this section being, until a few years back, entirely destitute of such organizations—his recollections of the ceremonies of the Order were exceedingly vivid and correct, when writer last conversed with him—about three years since.

Mar. 28, 1869

We are requested by the Building Committee of the Freedmen's Church, at this place, to give notice that the work is nearly completed, and it requested that all who subscribed to aid in the erection of the house, will pay off their subscriptions at once, as the money is now needed.

May 31, 1869

#### DISTRICT CONFERENCE

The District Conference for the Pearisburg District, (M. E. Church South) will be held at this place, commencing on the 25th of June. Bishop Doggett, Rev. Drs. Cunningham and Wiley, together with other ministers, are expected to be present.

Arrangements are being made to so repair and strengthen the church edifice as will prevent even the possibility of the recurrence of the scenes of last year. The house will be made secure, and none need stay away through fear.

from June 5, 1869

#### PUBLIC MEETING

At a meeting of a portion of the citizens of Giles, held at the Court House, on the 3d June, 1869, on motion Dr. J. W. Easley was called to the chair, and Jas B. Peck appointed secretary.

On motion a committee of one from each magisterial district was appointed to report delegates to the Congressional and Senatorial District Conventions. The following are the committees:

Congressional District - D. E. Johnston, N. Worley, J. H. French, G. R. Cecil.

Senatorial District - S. Lucas, J. H. Peck, J. H. French, H. W. Broderick.

The committees retired and in a short time returned and reported the following lists of delegates.

Congressional Convention - C. D. Peck, W. Bane, W. G. Shannon, A. G. Pendleton, P. W. Strother, H. W. Broderick, C. I. Johnston, S. E. Lybrook, J. P. Snidow, H. T. Jones, C. H. Payne, P. Price, delegates, and R. A. Price, Jno. A. Kelley, Jas. Sheffey, W. D. Strother, alternates.

Senatorial Convention - E. Johnston, C. D. Peck, H. Bane, G. R. Cecil, J. D. Johnston, W. Adair, A. C. Pack, P. W. Strother, W. Eggleston, D. E. Johnston, J. P. Snidow, C. I. Johnston, F. P. Payne, G. W. Hines, J. Cooke, J. Walker, delegates, and Col. W. Watts, D. S. Read, G. P. Taylor, alternates.

On motion it was

Resolved, That in the opinion of this meeting, it is eminently proper that the Convention which shall meet in Marion to nominate a candidate to represent us in Congress shall select one of known Conservative principles, and tried and true, and who can take the oaths required by law, or whose political disabilities have been removed.

Resolved, That the delegates from this county are requested to correspond with the delegates from the counties composing this Senatorial District as to the propriety of holding a convention at Gravel Hill or Midway, in the county of Craig, or some central point in the District.

Resolved, That these proceedings be published in the Pearisburg Gazette, and that the other papers in the Districts be requested to copy.

J. W. EASLEY, Ch'm. J. B. Peck, Sec'y.

June 5, 1869

On last Sunday the Freedmen's church at this place was dedicated—Rev. E. Lawson, P. E., and several other colored ministers were present. The meeting has been protracted for several days, and quite a revival gotten up.

from June 12, 1869

#### DEATH OF THE OLDEST CITIZEN

Mr. DAVID EATON, the oldest citizen of this county—his age being estimated at one hundred and eight years—died at his residence on Thursday last, 10th inst. He was born in Ireland, and came to this country in 1802. He was a member of the M. E. Church for many years, and his life corresponded with the professions he made. He was also considered the oldest Mason in the United States, having been a member of the Order not less than eighty-seven years.

Mr. Eaton did not know his age, or at what time he was made a Mason, and from diplomas in his possession, we are alone able to form an opinion of his age, or the length of time he has been a Mason.

He was buried with Masonic honors on yesterday afternoon.

July 3, 1869

We invite particular attention to the advertisement of the New River White Sulphur Springs, located in this county,

which are now open and ready for the reception of visitors.

A more beautiful and more romantic spot cannot be found in the mountains anywhere, while Capt. Wm. Eggleston is a prince of hotel keepers, charming every one with his whole souled manner and hospitality. Every comfort and convenience that heart can wish will be found here: a well-filled bar and excellent table.

The Springs are convenient to access to every point, and persons desiring a pleasant home, during the summer months, can find none better or more pleasant than this.

#### NEW RIVER WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, Giles County, Va.

Are open for visitors, and patronage is solicited. Communications with the Montgomery White and Yellow Sulphur Springs by stage coaches. A boat at Central Depot, on the Va. & Tenn. R. R. to convey passengers to the Springs in a half day.

Conveyance at Giles C. H. to take parties to the Springs, 9 miles off.

A coach at the Springs for persons wishing to visit the Salt Pond.

Board per day	\$ 2.50
" per day	15.00
" per month	50.00

Children under 10 years of age and colored servants half the above rates.

Proprietors.

July 24, 1869

The County Court, on Tuesday last, laid the county levy for the year, fixing the tax upon property at 30 cents on the \$100, and \$1.50 as the capitation tax.

July 31, 1869

Mr. Horace Greely, General Wisewell, Judge Cuppie, and one or two others, paid a visit to this county for the purpose of inspecting the lands of the Metropolitan Mining and Manufacturing Company, lying in Giles and Bland counties. The party reached this place on Wednesday afternoon on horse back, and after resting an hour or two, took a hack for Dublin.

We learn that they expressed themselves highly delighted with the prospect, and thought they would probably invest in the company.

July 31, 1869 also

Hon. Horace Greely, editor of the New York Tribune passed through the city yesterday, on his way to Dublin Pulaski county. Mr. Greely was in company with three gentlemen of New York, who are on a prospecting tour, designing to examine certain rich mineral tracts in Southwestern Virginia, with the ultimate view of investing.

—from Lynch, Rep., 27th

Oct. 26, 1869

#### MARRIED

On the 14th instant, by Rev. J. Douthat, Mr. JOHN H. SLUSSER, of Montgomery, & Miss ELVINA J. SNIDOW.

#### DIED

In Clover Hollow, on the 14th instant, Mrs. MARIA ALBERT, consort of Lewis Albert, aged about 50 years. The deceased had been the companion of her husband for upwards of 20 years, and in the relative position of wife and mother was most faithful in the performance of her duties. In early life, and before she had left the home of her childhood, she made a profession of religion and united with the Lutheran church, in which she remained to the day of her death.

PASTOR

### ***The Men from Giles County Who Served in World War I***

The following list was taken directly from the records of the Giles County Draft Board. It has been noted that a number of errors exist in the spelling of names, initials, etc. Also there may be omissions. However, these are the official records and as such have not been altered.

Adair, Arthur Chapman, Narrows  
Adair, Bennett Fulton, Narrows  
Atkins, Cary Metetus, Eggleston  
Allen, Charles William, Narrows  
Akers, George Harvey, Staffordsville  
Akers, Fred James, Narrows  
Allen, Elmer Ernest, Trigg  
Akers, Fred Thomas, Interior  
Anderson, Theodore Cuyler, Eggleston

\*Butler, William Powell, Pearisburg  
Bowen, Homer King, Pembroke  
Breen, Harry, Newport  
Blankenship, Burman, Narrows  
Bailey, John Walter, Wingo  
Bishop, Harry Habersham, Eggleston  
Buckland, Jasper Aaron, Rich Creek  
Beckner, John Boyd, Pembroke  
Buckland, Lloyd Rucker, Rich Creek  
Bratton, William Clarence, Bane  
Beamer, Clifton Lee, Chapel  
Bond, Robert Lee, Bluff City  
Bratton, Joseph Emory, Bane  
Breeding, James Luther, Wingo  
Brown, William H., Narrows  
Bane, Samuel Keith, Narrows  
Blankenship, Charles Otto, Narrows  
Bailey, R. Jr., Narrows  
Bishop, Lee Byrd, Hoge Store  
Blackburn, Robert Lee, Narrows  
Boulding, Harvey Lee, Rich Creek  
Brogan, John Cleveland, Rich Creek  
Breedlove, John Daniel, Pearisburg  
Brotherton, Arthur Lee, Pearisburg  
Brotherton, Fred Sheffey, Pearisburg  
Blankenship, Daultie E., Rich Creek  
Britts, Claude Pierce, Hoge Store  
Blankenship, Forest Dale, Narrows  
\*Bingham, Frank M., Princeton  
Bingham, Robert Taylor, Pearisburg  
Bingham, Walter, Pearisburg  
Bonham, John Cyrus, Narrows  
Bailey, James W., Narrows  
Barley, Sidney C., Narrows  
Buchanan, Wagoner Ira, Bane  
Beamer, Franklin Charles, Narrows

Caudill, Walter Cleveland, Pearisburg  
Collins, Burnett S., Pembroke  
Corell, John H., Bane  
Clark, Wirt Jackson, Narrows  
Cumbee, Claude Hampton, Eggleston  
Caudle, Mitchel, Pearisburg  
Croy, James Andrew, Pearisburg  
Croy, William Clay, Pearisburg  
Croy, Allen Kenneth, Pearisburg  
Chandler, John Edward, White Gate  
Clark, William Henry, Narrows  
Cress, Kirby Lee, Pembroke  
Cooper, Samuel M., Pearisburg  
Carr, Joseph Robert, Poplar Hill

Cauley, Emory Clarence, Rich Creek  
Conley, Bernard Drayton, Phlegar  
Cumbee, Gilbert, Maybrook  
Coburn, Ernest Dewey, Narrows  
Carr, Herbert Addison, Penvir  
Cumbee, Babe Frank, Hoge Store  
Coburn, Lona Blackford, Narrows  
Charleton, Hugh Shields, Bluff City  
Cruise, Albert Leslie, Pembroke  
Criner, Crockett Ed., Newport  
Cook, Grover Amon, Goodwins Ferry  
Cook, Erastus Lee, Goodwins Ferry  
Correll, James Warren, Bane  
Clark, Daniel Wirt, Narrows  
Cook, Gilbert Peery, Goodwins Ferry  
Clyburn, Henly Thomas, Bluff City  
Cunningham, William Lewis, Bluff City  
Carr, Earl Bryan, Pearisburg  
Caldwell, James Newton, Bane  
Cronk, Earl, T. W., Pembroke  
Criner, Dallas, Newport  
Criner, Eustas, Newport  
Criner, James, Newport  
Criner, Howard, Newport  
Criner, Early, Newport

Dunford, Alfonso, Curve  
Duncan, Henry Thomas, Ripplemead  
\*\*#Duncan, Leonard C., Rich Creek  
Dunford, Homer Newton, Curve  
Dunford, James William, Phlegar  
Dillowe, Oscar Samuel, Narrows  
Dillowe, George Lee, Narrows  
Dunbar, Lacy Clarence, Pembroke  
Dennis, William W., Pearisburg  
Dalton, Timothy, White Gate  
Douthat, Jacob Fred, Ripplemead  
Davis, Miller Daniel, Pearisburg  
Day, Philip Sidney, Narrows  
Denton, Thomas Hubert, Ripplemead  
Denton, Edgar Isaac, Ripplemead  
Dewey, Kenith Audley, Pembroke

Echols, Carl Lamar, Newport  
Eaton, Crozier Anderson, Staffordsville  
Eaton, Erastus Daniel, Staffordsville  
Eaton, Roscoe Carlyle, Staffordsville  
Eaton, Emory Shuler, Trigg  
Eaton, Hugh Mitchell, Staffordsville  
Eaton, Herbert L., Staffordsville  
\*\*#Elmore, Otey Hartford, Kire  
Elmore, Dexter Nelson, Kire  
#Echols, Walter Kyle, Maybrook  
Epling, William Harvey, Rich Creek

French, Arthur Lee, Narrows  
French, Travis Milton, Narrows  
French, George Francis, Penvir  
French, Andrew Johnston, Phlegar  
French, Dolphin, Narrows  
French, Kent Gordon, Narrows  
\*French, Wirt W., Narrows  
Farrier, Andrew Lewis, Newport  
Fletcher, George Everette, Bluff City  
Fletcher, James Wallace J., Bluff City  
Fizer, Arthur Mitchell, Penvir  
Farmer, David E., Lawton  
Ferrell, W. Mitchell, Phlegar  
Ferrell, Elmer LaFayette, Chapel  
Ferrell, Frank Shuler, Penvir





Williams, Landon K., Eggleston  
 Williams, Sam, Mountain Lake  
 #Williams, Alfred Howe, Pembroke  
 \*\*Williams, Tom, Hoge Store  
 Williams, Kyle Clayton, Pembroke  
 \*\*#Williams, Ernest M., Pembroke  
 Williams, Walker Allen, Pearisburg  
 Williams, Harry, Pembroke  
 Williams, Raymond Draper, Pembroke  
 Williams, Martin Jr., Pearisburg  
 Williams, John W. Jr., Richmond  
 Wheelwright, William H., Pearisburg

Young, Grover S., Bluff City

Armstead, Lum Jackson, Pearisburg

Agee, Joseph, Glenn Lyn  
 Albert, Archie, Poplar Hill  
 Albert, Archie, Poplar Hill

Brown, Clifton,, Eggleston  
 Braxton, William, Glen Lynn

Coleman, Don, Pearisburg  
 Coleman, Lon, Pearisburg  
 Carter, Paul Fleming, White Gate

Dabney, Joe, Pearisburg  
 Dean, William Bernard, Pearisburg  
 Dabney, Cobb, Pearisburg  
 Dickinson, Clarence Edwin, Pearisburg

Edwards, John, Pembroke

Freeman, Cue, Mountain Lake

George, Roscoe Winston, Bluff City

Harris, John T., Lawton  
 Hicks, Harvey, Poplar Hill

Jefferson, Charles, Pearisburg

Lybrook, William, Pearisburg

Montgomery, George Luther, Poplar Hill  
 Moss, Harry Edward, Newport  
 Madison, John Mac, Pearisburg

Page, James Wintfred, Newport  
 Peery, Charles Roscoe, Pearisburg  
 Peery, William Lewis, Pearisburg  
 Parks, John Alf, Hoge Store

Serrell, John, Pearisburg  
 Slash, Bill, Hoge Store  
 Smith, Tom, Pearisburg  
 Smith, Spurgen Andrew, Pearisburg  
 Smith, McKinley, Pearisburg

Thompson, Benj., Ripplemead  
 Thompson, Robert, Pearisburg

Whales, Horton, Klotz

\* Wounded

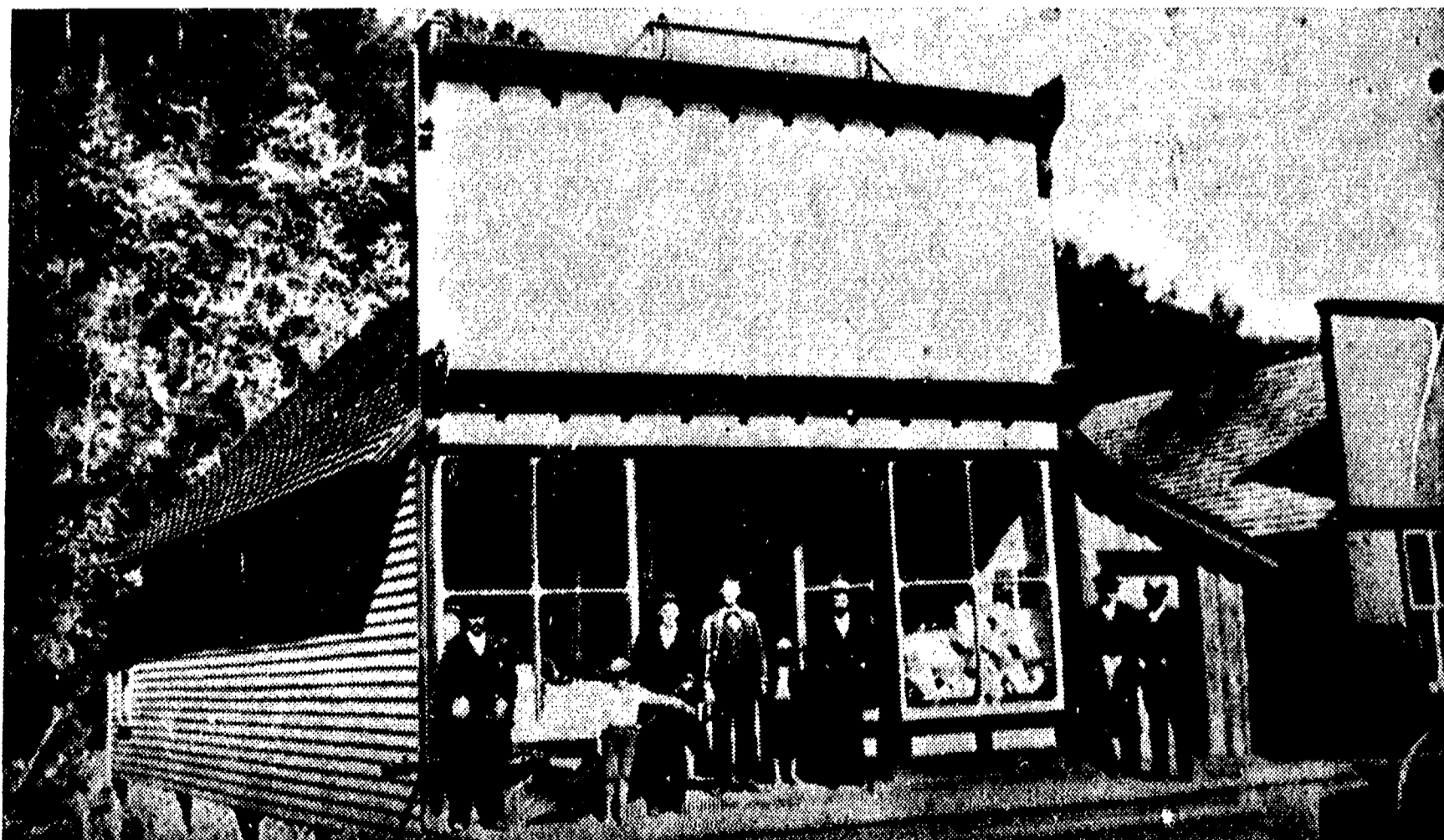
\*\* Died as Result of Wounds

# Died in Camp

## Killed in Action

\*# Died at Sea

\*\*# Died in France



Giles County was already a hundred years old when this business establishment was opened on Monroe Street in Narrows. The second location of Giles County's oldest store, it marked the rising star of a young merchant named W. O. Coburn, as well as a portent for the future of the Town of

Narrows as a trading center. Located less than a hundred yards from the large brick building which houses the modern-day Coburn's, this wood frame building has long since disappeared.

## *The Cliffs at Eggleston*



Some things do not change — When Adam Harmon came to Gunpowder Springs (now Eggleston) early in the Eighteenth Century, there was a vast wilderness of great towering forests, but the Palisades of New River were almost as they are today. This inspiring and beautiful sight is unmarked as

a tourist attraction, and has become commonplace to the present residents of the area, but one cannot help but think that Harmon, on first viewing this work of God, might have uncovered his head and bowed to pray.

## **Although Officially 150 Years Old This Year, Giles County's History Goes Back Nearly 300 Years**

The first white man believed to have entered New River Valley was Col. Abraham Wood in 1654. Wood lived at Fort Petersburg, near where the City of Petersburg now stands.

Col. Wood obtained authority from the Colonial Government to open trade with the Western Indians, and it is stated he and his party came over the Alleghany Mountains at a place now and for a long time known as "Wood's Gap" in Floyd County.

Wood and his party passed down a small stream to reach what is today known as New River. When Col. Wood saw a river flowing in a different direction from those over

the route which he had traveled, he gave it his own name, "Wood's River," and so it appears on the old maps of Virginia.

## **Early Beginnings**

The advent of the first white men in the area now comprising Giles County dates back to the year 1671 when the expedition of Batt and Fallam penetrated as far as what is now Rich Creek, at which point they turned back to the East, believing they had come near the proximity of the Western Waters (the Pacific Ocean.)

An entry in the Journal of Batt and Fallam, made as they entered the New River valley near Radford, carried this comment:

*"A very small descent on the other side and as soon as over we found vallies tending Westerly. It was (a) pleasing tho dreadful sight to see all the mountains and hills as if piled one upon another."*

## Augusta County

Augusta County was formed from Orange County, and the area West of the Blue Ridge was known as *West Augusta*.

A vast unexplored region, West Augusta extended from the top of the Alleghenies Westward to the Mississippi River. The Canawhay Indians occupied the valley and plateau of Floyd and Carrol Counties, and the river *Kanawha* (pronounced *Con-noy-ya*) took its name from this tribe.

On Jefferson's map (1787) all of New River is shown as the Kanawha. Judge McComas states that *Kanawha* was an Indian name (Shawnee) meaning *New Waters*.

Hermann's Map (1670) which was used by Col. Abraham Wood showed no Westerly flowing water, but Collet's Map (1774) had it as *New River*.

## Byrd's Trace

In 1764 Captain Byrd was employed to run a line between North Carolina and Virginia, also to cut a road from the James River near Lynchburg to a point near the town of Abingdon.

Byrd probably used the map of Jefferson which had been engraved in France in 1755. This map showed the Jackson's River, Bull Pasture, Cow Pasture and Catawba Creeks, but no westward flowing stream. Thus New River must have been unknown to Geographers as late as 1755. (Editor's Note: Geologists now tell us that New River may be one of the world's oldest, if not actually the oldest river in the world.)

Captain Byrd reached the present site of Christiansburg; and sent a party on ahead to explore the route. The party traveled southwest to reach an unknown river, and on their return reported that they had found a new river. On Byrd's return to Richmond the find was reported as a *new river*.

On the South Western part of his map, Byrd traced a river flowing in a westerly direction. This was known as *Byrd's Trace*.

## First Settlers

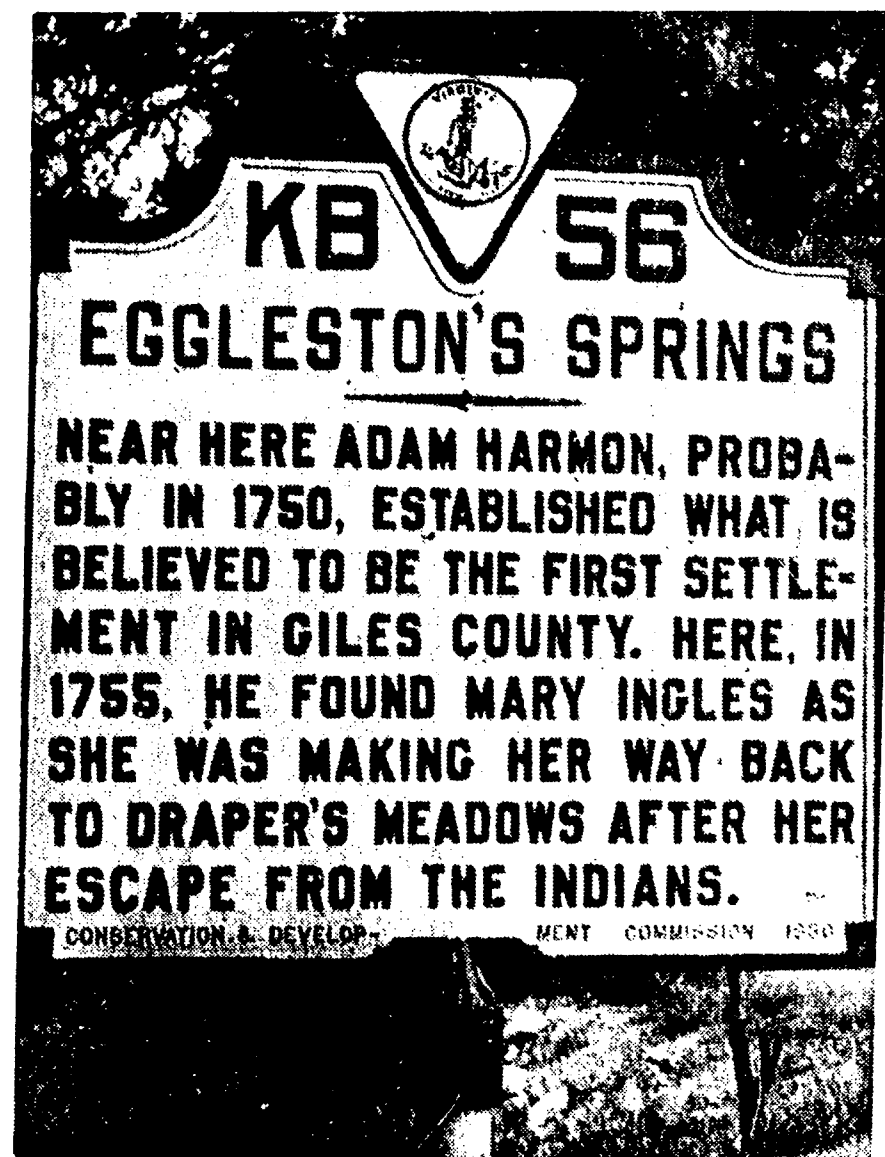
A rude stone on a grave near the mouth of East River at what is now the village of Glen Lyn tells all that is known of the first white settlers in Giles County. Inscribed on this stone at the time Hardesty's History was written (1884) was: "*Mary Porter killed by the Indians November 28, 1742.*"

In the inscription there followed something about Mr. Porter, but after a century and a half the crumbling away of the stone had rendered it illegible.

JOHN TONEY, the first actual settler, came in 1780 and settled here (at the mouth of the East River) and found graves and remains of a decayed log cabin.

This was only ten years after the first settlement in the Shenandoah Valley.

ADAM HARMON, member of a family of Indian fighters and a soldier in the Revolutionary War, settled at Gun Powder Springs (now known as Eggleston Springs) in the year 1749.



There is a legend that Mary Ingles climbed the Palisades to hide from marauding Indians, and it could well be true; despite the intrusion of electric power substations, railroad lines and present-day homes, this spot still holds an atmosphere of awe and mystery for those who pause a moment to marvel.

PHILIP LYBROOK came from Pennsylvania in 1750 to settle near what is now Pembroke.

MURDOCK MCKENSEY first settled on Walker's Creek in 1771 and then moved to the mouth of Wolf Creek, near the Town of Narrows, in 1778. The latter place was the scene of an Indian massacre only a few weeks after the McKenseys had arrived. According to available information the story of the McKensy Massacre is as follows:

In the spring of 1778 Moredock O. McKensy settled at the mouth of Wolf Creek near the present site of the stock pens at Narrows. A few weeks later, while the father and eldest son were away from home, Indians attacked the family and killed the mother and three children.

Two young daughters, Margaret and Elizabeth, were captured and remained captives for eighteen years during which time Margaret was transferred by the Shawnees to the Delaware tribe and was adopted by the Indian chief, Koothumpum.

According to legend, several years before Margaret returned home a young Indian chief fell desperately in love

with her but she refused to marry him. When he continued to annoy her with his ardent love making, she fled to a distant village and sought the protection of her Indian foster sister and brother. The young chief followed and attempted to kill Margaret, but was thwarted in his purpose by the young Indian woman who gave him a sound whipping and sent him on his way.

Finally, Margaret and Elizabeth were able to return home, where they married young men from the neighboring counties of Mercer and Monroe. A number of their descendants are now living in the area.

JOHN CHAPMAN settled on the bank of the New River near Walkers Creek. His house, burned by the Indians and rebuilt in 1772, stood on Walkers Creek within the past fifty years, where the date carved in the chimney was a famous landmark.

JACOB SNIDOW came to Sinking Creek at about the same time the Chapmans and Lybrooks settled, and suffered many deaths in his family, also others captured, during the Indian attack of August 7, 1774.

A great old Indian fighter and a soldier of the Revolution in one of its first battles (Point Pleasant) was WILLIAM WILEY, who came from Ireland and settled near The Narrows of New River in 1770. It is stated in *Hardesty's History* that Wiley manufactured razor strops from the skin of Indians, and descendants of the family are said to have one of these articles in their possession at this day.

JOSEPH HARE and EDWARD HALE came into the New River settlements in 1770. Both had been soldiers in the Revolution: Hare settled at the mouth of Wolf Creek near the McKensey home, and Hale settled farther up the Creek near the site of the present Giles Recreation Park.

Hale, a great Indian fighter and reputed to be deadly with a rifle, is the ancestor of the Hales in Giles and Mercer Counties. Grants to the land on which most of South Narrows is built were made to Edward Hale and his son Charles. These land grants, now in the possession of the Herbert Hale family bear the signatures of Richard Henry Lee, Edmund Randolph and Thomas Randolph, Governors of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The oldest document was dated 1793.

### ***Thomas Jefferson Was President of The United States in 1806 When Giles County Was Formed***

In 1738 the Colonial Legislature provided for a new county west of the Blue Ridge to be known as Augusta. It was formed from Orange; then came Botetourt, Fincastle, Montgomery, Greenbrier, Wythe, Monroe, Tazewell, and finally Giles.

The pioneers of this county were mostly distinguished for their heroism, which struck terror and dismay to the Indians, and was such that when, during the darkest days of the Revolutionary War when troops from two States had mutinied and it seemed that all was lost General George Washington was heard to exclaim:

*"Leave me but a banner to place upon the mountains of West Augusta, and I will rally around me the men that will lift our bleeding country from the dust and set them free."* . . .  
*Pioneer Days.*

### ***The Early Days***

The early settlers — Who were they? Principally they were the Scotch, the Irish, Germans and Englishmen. Some of them were descendants of immigrants; some were themselves but newly arrived in the new country; all were sturdy, resolute and God-fearing. They brought with them a horse or two, a cow, a long rifle with powder and ball, a dog. Their principal tool was the axe, whetted with consuming patience to an edge of keenness. Their household furniture was such as could be carried over the mountains on horses. Their Book was the Bible, even though they known as "Dissenters".

They hewed out their log homes with the axe. They felled the forest and built stockade-like forts for protection from the Indians and to keep children "and animals" from straying off into the woods.

The deeds of heroism which they performed are legendary. They stood on a frontier, alone, segregated, cut off surrounded by terrors and perils, not the least of which was the fear of sickness with no possibility of medical aid.

They risked their lives — sometimes hourly.

The raids of the Indians brought death to young and old.

There was constant danger from wild animals, especially the panther and the bear: a panther "nine feet in length" was reported, and there were wolves.

How brave and courageous were their women, and how resourceful they had to be!

The pioneers to Giles County found majestic mountains, awesome but beautiful, and rushing streams. They found great towering forests of trees and inspiring, cathedral-like pallisades of rock. They found the deer, the elk, buffalo, bear, panther, wild cats, turkeys, pigeons, black and grey squirrels.

They found vipers, too: the rattlesnake and the copperhead.

But above all else, they found freedom.

### ***The Year of 1806***

Let's take a look back to 1806, the year in which Giles County was formed. The struggling new nation consisted of a loosely-bound confederation of seventeen States and six million people. In his second election, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia had won an astounding victory. So, it is 1806, and the Gentleman from Monticello — the Father of Democracy — is in his second term as President of the United States.

Jefferson had sent his secretary, Meriwether Lewis, and William Clark on an expedition to trace the Missouri River to its source. They were to cross the mountains and follow the best water communication which offered itself from thence to the Pacific.

Lewis and Clark started from St. Louis and returned to the same place in September, 1806. This exploration gave some idea of the great extent and wealth of the Territory of Louisiana.

James Monroe came back from England in 1806 with a treaty which Great Britain demanded, omitting the two fundamental points of (1) impressment of our seamen and (2) in-



THE GILES COUNTY COURTHOUSE at Pearisburg. Famed throughout Southwestern Virginia for its graceful beauty, the main portion

of this building stood through the Civil War and still bears evidence of the Great Conflict.

demnity for the losses which Americans had incurred in the seizure of goods and vessels.

President Jefferson declined to approve the treaty, and this led to the War of 1812.

Two other events happened at about this time: Aaron Burr was tried for alleged treason against the United States, and the U. S. Frigate "Chesapeake" was attacked by the British sloop of war "Leopard".

This attack occurred in Virginia waters, and the outrage created a great stir throughout the country.

Mathew Fontaine Maury, "The Pathfinder of the Seas," was born in 1806. Also in that year William H. Cabell was Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia; Cabell County, West Virginia, was named in his honor.

### ***Formation of Giles County***

In compliance with an act of the General Assembly of Virginia, passed on the 6th day of January, 1806 and entitled "An Act Forming a New County out of Certain Parts of Montgom-

rey, Monroe and Tazewell Counties", and covering that portion . . . beginning at Gauley Mountain on New River, West, and Gauley Mountain, North, to Gap Mountain, East, and Cloyd's Mountain, South . . . (shall) . . . after the first day of May next (1806) form one distinct and new county to be known as Giles County."

### ***The First County Court***

Provisions for the first County court were that the Justices of the new County should meet on the first court day after the first of May at the home of George Pearis in said county, and after taking prescribed oaths and taking bonds of a sheriff and appointing a clerk, to proceed to erect at some central point the necessary public buildings.

In the early spring, William H. Cabell, Governor of Virginia, issued Justice's commissions to the following: George Pearis, Thomas Shannon, Christian Snidow, David French, David Johnson, Edward McDonald, Isaac Chapman, John

Kirk, John Peck, Christopher Champ, John Burk and James Bane.

These gentlemen convened and the first court was held on the 13th day of May, 1806, in a house adjacent to the dwelling house of Captain Pearis on New River, not far from which point the Pearisburg railroad station is now situated.

David Johnson was appointed Sheriff of the County, and his bond was set at \$7,000.00.

David French was appointed to the office of Clerk.

Philip Lybrook was appointed County Surveyor following approval by the president of William and Mary College.

## ***Second Term***

At the second term of the court which convened on June 10th, 1806, the first Grand Jury was impaneled for the county and was composed of the following named gentlemen: William Smith, Foreman; Matthew French, John Peters, Charles Walker, Joseph Hare, Thomas Clyburn, Adam Johnston, William Wilburn, William Brown, John Chapman, William Tracy, David Summers, William Law, John Sartin, Edward Hale and Robert Clendenin.

The first to produce a license to practice law in the courts of Giles County was Henry Chapman; the second was John Lewis.

According to Johnston's History (page 157): "Two indictments were found by the jury at this term, to wit: one against Peter Dingess for retailing spiritual (sic) liquors, and one against Willam Stowers for entering the whiskey house of John Toney without leave and making use of his liquors.

"George Pearis and John Toney were each granted a license to keep an Ordinary (saloon) at their respective houses, they both having given the require bonds."

Giles County, apparently, was not entirely without its places of diversion even in that day.

## ***County Has Taken—and Given***

GILES COUNTY was designated in 1806 from the territory of the counties of Montgomery, Tazewell and Monroe, and was named after William B. Giles, a member of Congress and later a Governor of Virginia. It first comprised a territory of about 100 miles in length and 30 miles in width, but its boundary lines have been changed four times since its formation, reducing its area to 369 square miles.

The line between Giles and Monroe was changed in 1830, adding to the extent of Giles County, and the territory was again enlarged in 1841 by the addition of a small portion of the county of Mercer. In 1851, upon the formation of Craig, Giles lost a portion of its territory, and again in 1858 gave up another portion to Craig.

It was also asked to give up a large area in 1861 when Bland was organized.

DURING THE EARLY DAYS of the organized settlements, the people frequently suffered from Indian attacks. One of these is described in the Kercheval "History of the Valley of Virginia" as follows:

"In the year 1774 the Indians commenced their outrages in the vicinity of Sinking Creek, on New River . . . . . In July of this year, John Lybrook (now living, 1836) with several other children, while at play near the stream, were discovered by four Indians. One ahead of his party pursued young Lybrook, who escaped by jumping a gully twelve feet wide. The rest of the children sprang into a canoe and were followed by the Indians, who killed and scalped five of them.

"A sister of Lybrook, a girl of 13, jumped out of the canoe and ran, pursued by one of the Indians. Her life was saved by a remarkably fierce dog, who attracted by her screams, jumped upon the savage and threw him down, hung and jerked violently upon him while the girl got out of danger. The Indian struck at him with his war club, and finally knocked him down; the dog ran to the canoe and guarded the dead children until the people took them away for burial. The animal refused to follow them — immediately ran off, and soon raised a most pitious howl."

THE FIRST COUNTY COURT was held in Giles on May 13, 1806 at the home of Captain George Pearis, situated about one mile from the present courthouse. Upon commissions issued by the Governor of the Commonwealth, 12 men constituted the first court of the County.

## ***The County Seat***

The first court of Giles County met in the home of George Pearis, whose house stood on a bluff overlooking New River and now just above Wenonah station of the Norfolk and Western Railway.

George Pearis's land extended up and down New River approximately two and a half miles east of Pearisburg, which town was named in his honor.

Mr. Pearis gave 53 acres of land plus the timber and stone sufficient to build the necessary building for the establishment of the Giles County seat.

The first office of the County Clerk was built of roughhewn oak logs which had been cut nearby. Some of these original logs are still in existence today and may be seen forming a bridge over a drainage ditch on the Boxwood Farm of D. W. and George Mason in Pearisburg.

## ***William Branch Giles***

In the modern day, Giles County is noted for being different. That is to say the citizens of the County do not always agree on political and public matters with their fellow Virginians — and oftentimes they do not even agree among themselves. In Giles, for instance, a Republican frequently has a chance of being elected to public office. And in Giles, voices

are frequently raised in opposition to the popular trend of sentiment in the State Capital.

Sometimes this "difference" is laid to just plain downright "Mountain Cussedness." Sometimes it is an important factor in changing the course of events.

Why should this "difference" exist? Is there a reason for it, perhaps an historical precedence; a blood heritage, or a timehonored tradition?

Let's take a look at William Branch Giles, the gentleman for whom our County was named.

So far as is known, William B. Giles never set foot in the 300-square mile territory which was to bear his name. He was an aristocrat, born to rule, and his business and calling held him in the more urban and civilized portions of the Old Dominion. He was not an explorer, not an adventurer, and certainly as far as the true sense of the word is concerned, he was not a Democrat. But he was unquestionably a figure, and in this day and age he might be labelled a "Great Dissenter," for he appears to have been on the opposite side of most popular measures.

Surely he had a kinship, if not a blood relationship, with a fairly representative portion of what has come to be known in the State as "The Fighting Ninth!"

### ***Native of Amelia County***

William B. Giles was born in Amelia County on August 12, 1762, so that by the time of the Declaration of Independence and the eve of the American Revolution he was not quite fourteen years old. He could not have helped but be influenced by the stirring addresses of such older fellow Virginians as Patrick Henry and the great leadership of General Washington, and the sharply clear thinking of Thomas Jefferson.

Giles chose the law as his profession, and after the prescribed course in Hampden and Princeton Colleges he was enrolled in William and Mary to study law under the great George Wythe.

In 1791, at the age of 29, he was elected to serve in the House of Representatives, where he was successively returned with the exception of one term (1798-1800) when he took a "breather" by serving in the House of Delegates. In Congress, Giles gained fame by opposing John Jay's treaty and war with France in 1794.

In 1804, Giles' political star bounded upward when he succeeded Wilson Cary Nicholas in the United States Senate, and apparently keeping in the good graces of his constituents he served until March 3, 1815.

However, in 1811 Giles incurred popular wrath by his failure to vote for the United States Bank, as well as for his opposition to the Madison Administration. Therefore, at the end of his term in 1815 he retired to private life, and remained there until 1825, when he was defeated by no less a personage than John Randolph for the State Senate.

The following year, however, William B. Giles bounced back and was elected to the Legislature.

And then, on March 4, 1827, he succeeded John Tyler as Governor of the State of Virginia.

Giles was 65 when he became Governor; in that day, this was considered a ripe old age. The most important event in his administration was the meeting of the State Convention, which quickly developed complications that threatened internal war.

The Constitution adopted in 1776 had existed to this time without change. The changes proposed by the Convention were accomplished by the union of the Valley Counties with the East, and the results were not satisfactory to the West, which went so far as to threaten secession.

### ***The Constitutional Convention***

The net result of the Convention under Governor Giles was to do away with county representation altogether; to reduce the council from eight members to three, and to extend suffrage to leaseholders and householders. But the government of the counties was permitted to remain in the hands of the Justices as of old, under controlling power of the Legislature.

When submitted to the people, the change was ratified by a vote of 26,055 for and 15,566 against.

It is significant that 130 years ago, more than 40 thousand people in Virginia were franchised to vote — and did vote — in a Constitutional election. (The women did not vote, but doubtless they had a voice then — as now!)

William Branch Giles died on December 4, 1830, at his residence "The Wigwam" in Amelia County, and perhaps it is also significant that his most enduring memorial was the County which — although it was among those which threatened to "secede" from the Dominion — today bears his name.

### ***A Portrait of Governor Giles***

In the collection of the Historical Society of Virginia there is a full-length portrait of William Branch Giles as Governor. He is represented as seated before a table with writing materials, and with a crutch — rendered necessary from rheumatic affliction — resting against his chair.

The countenance of Governor Giles bears an expression of shrewdness. His dress is that of the day: the striking ruffled shirt, blue coat with brass buttons — the entire ensemble impresses one as that of a quondam fox-hunting English Squire, who enjoyed the good things of this world with keen zest.

In his obituary notice which appeared in the Richmond Enquirer he is recorded as having been (1) Distinguished as an honest politician and able statesman; (2) Loving liberty and hating despotism — devoted to his country; (3) Loving the Constitution and jealous of its violation; (4) A man of spotless integrity, with an unreserved candor in his communication which disdained anything like concealment, and (5) A charm of conversation and courtesy of manner which passes all description.

The writings of William Branch Giles were collected in 1827 and published under the general title of — *Miscellanies*.



#### THE NEW RIVER TANNERY

Exact date of the upper photo, and the employees names, are not known. The lower picture was taken around 1900. Those in the front row are, left to right: O. Kelly, Honaker,

John Woods, Unknown, C. Vaught, Jim Brown, R. A. Lucas, D. Runions and Farley. Back row: Small boy unknown, Bill Gautier, P. Woods, Joe Ratcliffe, Edd Fleeman, Brown Kelly and John Whittaker.

### *Pearisburg Created in 1808*

In the year of 1808, Pearisburg was created by Act of Legislature as a Town, and twenty-seven years later, in 1835, it was incorporated.

In Howe's History of Virginia, the author states that the Town of Pearisburg in 1846 contained about thirty buildings, mostly of stone and timber. One of the old houses, owned by the late Dr. J. A. Booth, is still standing in an excellent state of

preservation.

Several buildings still in use in Pearisburg, including the beautiful and stately Giles County Court House, are one hundred or more years old. But most of the early structures have given way to the encroachments of time and the demand for more modern structures.

The offer of Justice Pearis of land for the location for the County Court House and town was accepted, and on this land

the Town of Pearisburg was originally built covering approximately 51 acres.

Pearis also furnished the stone and timber for the first log courthouse, which was built on what is now Main and Church Streets. This property is owned by the Pearisburg Methodist church (1948) and dedicated as the "Parsonage."

The old log courthouse was used until a stone building was constructed on the site now known as "Courthouse Square," and this building was in use until the year 1836, when the present Court House was built.

Additions and remodeling have altered the appearance of Giles County's Courthouse, but the basic design is unchanged, and there are many residents alive today who recall the activity centered about it during the Centennial Celebration in 1906.

Even in that early day there were a few automobiles in the County, and on "Court Days" their appearance created a great commotion, both amongst the people and the patient beasts of burden which drew their carriages and wagons.

### ***Early Roads***

The earliest roads followed the Indian trails to some extent, and little was known about them until a century or more ago when a better class of roads called "Turnpikes" was opened up.

The longest road traversing Giles County was known as the Cumberland Gap Turnpike. This road was chartered in 1834 and was built between 1838 and 1843.

This Turnpike came by way of the present towns of Bluefield, Glen Lyn (which was then known as Parkinson Shumate's Ferry), Lurich, Narrows, Pearisburg, Ripplemead, Pembroke and Newport, then followed Sinking Creek on its way to New Castle.

In a general way, this road followed the present route of Highways 460, 100 and 42.

The Giles-Fayette-Kanawha Turnpike ran from Kanawha Salt works in Kanawha County (now West Virginia) by the Falls of Kanawha, and reached Giles County at Rich Creek and on to Giles Court House. The Company was incorporated in March, 1837 to build a 15-foot graded road on a 30-foot right of way.

Other turnpikes in Giles County were the Pulaski-Giles Turnpike which ran from the Narrows to the Pulaski line and on to Newbern. The Mountain Lake-Salt Sulphur Springs Turnpike ran from about Goodwin's Ferry to Kire at the West Virginia line and across Peters Mountain; this route followed more or less what is the present Stony Creek road.

The first hard-surfaced road built in Giles County was between Pearisburg and Hoge's Chapel in 1922. The remainder of Highway 460 in Giles County was built in the period between 1926 and 1932.

The relocation of 460 north of New River was built in 1939 due to construction of the Celco Plant of Celanese Corporation of America; incredible though it may seem to modern motorists (particularly truck drivers!) where the modern concrete bridge crosses New River at Bluff City, a ferry was in operation less than twenty years ago.

Highway 100 between Pearisburg and the Pulaski line was hard surfaced between the years 1933 and 1937. Highway 61 was not taken into the State primary system until about 1941-

42 and was completed as a hard-surfaced road as far as Rocky Gap in 1951.

This road, up Wolf Creek, follows in part the old grade of the New River, Holston and Western Railway, and according to announced plans of the State Highway Department, another large portion of the old railroad grade will soon be improved for the highway.

### ***Stage Coaches***

The first means of transportation, as we have previously shown, in Giles County was the buffalo-hide boat. Early explorers constructed these boats by making ribs of sassafras and steamed oak and using the hides of buffalo which they found roaming the region.

Next came the horse, which brought the meager belongings of the early settlers through the mountain passes.

With the later development of roads, the first organized transportation system consisted of the stage coach, a picturesque vehicle which provided a back-breaking ride for those eager and affluent enough to want it.

One of the earliest stage coach lines ran from Fort Springs (near Union) through Salt Sulphur Springs, in Monroe County, over Peter's Mountain and White Oak Mountain to Mountain Lake and Eggleston Springs in Giles County.

Eggleston, first called "Gunpowder Springs" was then known as "Stay-tide."

This line connected with one coming in from Dublin over the mountains. The stage coaches were well patronized, due to the popularity of the Springs in Monroe County, West Virginia, and many notables of the early days passed through Giles County. (George Washington, however, as far as we know never slept here!)

### ***Railroads***

The first railroad to be built in Southwest Virginia was the Virginia and Tennessee. Chartered in 1884, this road was built through Pulaski County in 1854 and 55, and in 1856 was completed to Bristol.

On March 7, 1872, The New River Railroad, Mining and Manufacturing Company was chartered by the General Assembly of Virginia to operate a railroad from New River Depot in Pulaski County to the West Virginia line.

Work was begun on a narrow gauge railroad down New River in 1875. However, not much progress was made until 1881 when the Norfolk and Western Railway Company acquired the New River company's rights and proceeded with construction of a standard gauge road.

This railroad was completed into Pocahontas on May 21, 1884.

It was not until the Twentieth Century that The Virginian — the last Class I railroad to be built in the United States — began construction of its line.

We will deal further with the railroads and the important part they have played in the growth and development of Giles County. But for the moment, let us turn to an article written in 1931 by an outstanding authority on Giles County—the late William B. Snidow.



Within the past twenty-five years, the New River, Holston and Western Railway was a flourishing institution, furnishing freight and transportation service to the Wolf Creek Valley into Bland County at Rocky Gap. This rare photograph of Old Number 3, a Mogul type locomotive, made in 1914 shows the crew (left to right) Bud Hale, Clyde Coburn, Lon McGinley, Tom Wall, Ess Robertson and Bill Hale. The trip was an all-day affair, and passengers either packed their lunch or bought food from the farmhouses along the way.

### ***William Bane Snidow***

William Bane Snidow, Giles County native and one of the County's most outstanding attorneys, has been dead for several years, but the memory of the man and his accomplishments lives on. Perhaps in no single individual who ever lived was vested so much knowledge of the County's history; those who were privileged to know him recall that he was never at loss for an interesting anecdote or pertinent information about the County's past.

A plaque to Mr. Snidow's memory was recently installed and dedicated with fitting ceremonies in the Court Room of the Giles County Court House at Pearisburg. This plaque reads:

William Bane Snidow  
1877 — 1950  
Scholar of the Law  
Statesman — Friend of Man  
Erected By Giles County

### ***Explorers' Visit in 1671 Gave Rise to Dispute With French***

*By WILLIAM BANE SNIDOW*

What is now Giles County was once a part of Orange County, and later of Augusta, Fincastle, Botetourt and Montgomery Counties. Small portions of the county, including what is now the west end of the Glen Lyn bridge, were taken from Monroe and Tazewell Counties.

The visit to this section on September 17, 1671, of Thomas

Batt, Thomas Wood and Robert Fallam, representing Charles II, King of England, gave rise to the long conflict between the French and English for possession of the Mississippi valley.

This party made a proclamation of the banks of New River, near where the village of Lurich is now located, by which they sought to take possession of all that territory drained by the Mississippi and tributaries. Upon bared saplings its members carved the initials of William Berkley, governor of Virginia, and Abraham Wood, under whose authority the expedition was undertaken.

A few months previous the French laid claim to the same territory by virtue of the visit to the Great Lakes region of Daumont de Saint-Lusson.

By order of the colonial government, dated July 12, 1749, leave was granted to John Lewis and thirty-nine others (afterwards known as the Loyal Land company) to take up and survey 800,000 acres extending from the Greenbrier to the line of North Carolina.

The surveying was to be done within four years but in 1753 the time limit was renewed. Settlers were to gain title on paying the surveyor his fee, and the company three Pounds Sterling for each 100 acres. After the war of 1754-59 the privileges of the company were suspended.

### ***Soldier's Entitlement***

Soldiers of the French and Indian War, who were entitled to public land under the King's proclamation of 1763, began to settle on the land, which led to a petition by the agents and settlers who had located under the company to hold title accordingly. In 1773 permission to this effect was given by the

colonial council, and by a court decree of 1783 the title of the Loyal company to surveys made before 1776 was affirmed.

The colonial government granted to James Patton a large tract on Walker's Creek in 1752, which was conveyed by his executors, William Preston and others, to James Bane in 1796.

There may have been earlier surveys west of New River, but none is known to the writer. Practically all of this land to this day remains in the hands of the descendants of James Bane. (Hence, the origin of the name for the section of Bane.)

### ***Pioneers In Revolution***

Montgomery county was organized at about the time the Revolutionary war broke out and from the territory of which Giles County was a part there were several companies of militia engaged from the beginning of the war until the surrender at Yorktown.

The most conspicuous of these were those commanded by Capt. Thomas Shannon and Capt. Thomas Burk, who was succeeded by Capt. John Lucas.

Capt. Thomas Burk had been an officer in the colonial military establishment and refused to take the oath of allegiance to the new commonwealth and gave the reason for his refusal in a letter to Colonel Preston, and Captain John Lucas was commissioned in his stead.

Christian Snidow was a first lieutenant in Capt. Lucas' company. These companies of militia did great service for the Revolutionary cause all the way from Coal river to Cowpens, as is seen by the declarations filed by some of its members for pensions under the act of Congress of 1832 granting pensions to militiamen.

### ***The Formation of Giles County in 1806***

In 1806 Giles County was organized under an act of the general assembly and Governor Cabell issued commissions to twelve of its most prominent citizens as justices of the County Court, namely: George Pearis, Thomas Shannon, Christian Snidow, David French, David Johnston, Edward McDonald, Isaac Chapman, John Kirk, John Peck, Christopher Champ, John Burke, and James Bane, three of whom, Christian Snidow, Isaac Chapman and James Bane were lineal ancestors of the writer.

At this time the governor commissioned David Johnston sheriff, and he immediately qualified with Christian Snidow and Isaac Chapman as his sureties.

David French was elected clerk by the Court, which office was held by some member of the family for nearly fifty years. George Pearis was elected presiding justice.

This first court which organized the County was held on May 13, 1806.

### ***A Veritable Principality***

At that time Giles County was a veritable principality extending almost to the Ohio River but it has since been reduced to its present area by the creation of Bland County in Virginia and several counties in what is now West Virginia, including parts of Mercer, Wyoming, Raleigh, Logan, Mingo and perhaps others.

The County was named for William B. Giles, then a member of Congress and subsequently governor of Virginia. Its

present area is 349 square miles and Pearisburg, built upon land conveyed to the county by Col. George Pearis, is the county seat.

The first court was held at the home of Colonel Pearis and orders were entered for building a court house upon the lands donated by him which was built upon the same lot now used for that purpose. In 1836 the present court house was built and is now practically the same except for some remodeling done in the last few years.

### ***Physical Features of County***

This County might be truthfully called the Switzerland of America for it has mountain scenery unsurpassed, dotted with silvery lakes and beautiful streams. No description of this county would be complete without reference to its notable physical features as displayed in its grand mountains and magnificent scenery.

Toward the central part of the county is the lofty and beautiful Angels Rest Mountain, about 4,000 feet above sea level and 2,000 feet above the river below. Opposite to Angels Rest on the Northeast side of New River is Butt Mountain, of the same general formation and elevation.

Flanking the latter on the South is the Salt Pond Mountain with its Bald Knob, towering nearly 5,000 feet above the sea. Answering this mountain in position is the Sugar Run Mountain on the opposite, or Southwest side.

Toward the Southern side of the county are the important iron bearing parallel series composed of Spruce, John's Creek and Gap Mountains on the Northeast side of New River, and of Buckeye, Guinea and Walker's Mountains on the Southwest side of the river; Gap Mountain and Walker's Mountain answer to each other in line of continuation, while the towering and beautiful Peters Mountain separates it from West Virginia.

The most noted, and grandest scenery in Giles County is Mountain Lake, Cascades and Bald Knob. Mountain Lake is a celebrated health and pleasure resort on the top of Salt Pond Mountain, and truly it may be called the "Silver Gem of the Alleghanies," situated as it is almost on the summit of one of the highest mountains in Virginia, at an elevation of more than 4,000 feet above the sea, and with a surface area of about 250 acres.

### ***Lake Known to First Settlers***

There is a persistent tradition that this magnificent lake was formed there during the last century and a half, but despite this tradition and the wide publication which it has had, the best evidence shows beyond any doubt that this lake was in its present location when the first white man ever visited New River Valley. Gist's diary, which shows that he visited the spot in 1751, contains a good description of the lake which is the same as it would be described now.

Aside from the natural scenery and the objects of nature, man has worked marvels in this great county. It has two great railroad systems paralleling each other through the county — along the great cliffs of New River. The Norfolk and Western Railway and the Virginian Railway run entirely through the County on either side of the New River. The Potts Valley Branch of the N. & W. (since discontinued beyond Kimballton) traverses the Big Stony Valley, and the New River, Holston and Western (also discontinued) now owned and

operated, by the N. & W. traverses the Wolf Creek Valley leaving the main line at Narrows, which delights to think of itself as "The Fastest Growing Town in Virginia."

Narrows, once a town, now almost a city, is the scene of much business activity, the seat of the electrification plant of the Virginian Railway system, a large tannery and extract plant, and many other industries which entitle it to rank as one of the best towns in Virginia.

Along the two railroads are mammoth rock crushing plants for making ballast and other limestone products, and other industries which give steady employment to a large number of people at high wages.

At Glen Lyn is the mammoth plant of the Appalachian Electric Power Company, all of which gives Giles County the distinction of being the richest county of its size in Virginia, more than two-thirds of its taxes being paid by industrial corporations.

But the glory of Giles County is its bluegrass hills, and rich valleys where live happy and contented people.

(Written in 1931) —WILLIAM B. SNIDOW

### ***Two Schools in Pearisburg in 1806, Year Giles County Was Formed Population, "White, 170—Colored, 34."***

The "History of Counties" at the State Library in Richmond mentions Pearisburg as being laid off in June, 1806 and containing (in 1832) "county buildings (which) are handsome; about 30 dwellings, mostly stone; 4 stores, 2 taverns, 2 common schools, 2 tanyards, 2 saddlers, 2 hatters, 2 cabinet makers, 1 chairmaker and painter, 1 boot and shoe factory, 1 wheelright, 1 tailor, and 1 brick and stone mason." There were also "2 attorneys, 1 physician."

As for transportation, "stages running daily from Wythe Courthouse to Lewisburg. This line leaves main Western route at Newbern, Pulaski County, running from Washington City to Knoxville. There is also a mail from Franklin and another from Tazewell once a week."

The population was given as "white, 170; colored, 34."

Among Giles County towns and villages listed by the same source was Big Spring, "Western part of County on Main Post Road leading from Pearisburg to Tazewell Court House, having several dwellings, grist mill, wool carding machine, blacksmith shop; located (within) 100 yards of line which divides the counties of Tazewell and Giles. Population, 9 whites; 7 blacks."

Also listed was Chapman's Mill "255 miles S.W. of R." (Richmond?) for which no statistics were given.

IN 1832 THERE WAS expended for the education of "poor" children in Giles County the sum of \$281.66, and again in 1834 the sum of \$290.56. There was no record of the cost of educating "rich" children.

Taxes collected for 1833 amounted to \$564.21; the tax list for Giles County for 1834 included: Lots, \$21.20; Land, \$266.15; 298 Slaves, \$74.50; 2,348 Horses, \$140.88; 9 Studs, \$47.00; 3 Carryalls (wagons) \$3.00, and 1 Gig, 50c, for a total of \$553.23.

### ***Virginia Led in Education***

Although prior to the American Revolution, Virginia was foremost in education compared to her sister colonies, the Commonwealth's system of education was very far removed from that which we know today. There were no "public" schools. Whatever education was available was afforded by private schools, tutors, "charity" schools; the College of William and Mary took care of higher educational requirements, and then for the sons of the wealthy there were the academies and colleges of England.

The children of the poor were almost universally "bound out"; that is to say, they were apprenticed to learn a trade of some kind, and their masters were required to teach them reading, writing and arithmetic — (the famous 3 R's!)

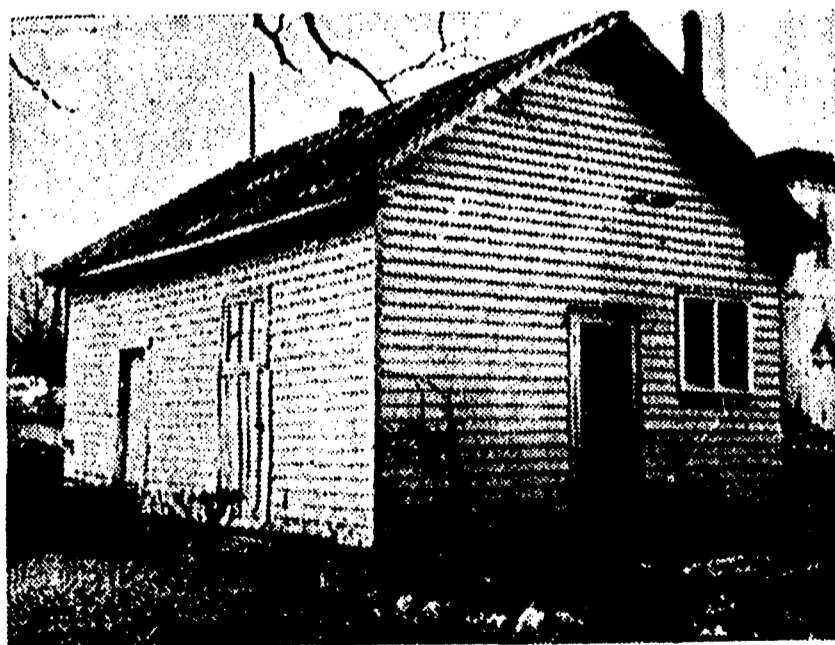
It was Thomas Jefferson who conceived the ideal of a general free school system, and the nearest the State got to it was an act of the General Assembly of 1845-46. According to this Act, each County had to decide (by a two-thirds vote) whether it wanted to have free schools or not.

Only nine counties accepted the provisions of the Act, and up until about 1860 elementary education in Virginia was totally unsatisfactory.

Giles County's present complex public school system, even with its admitted inadequacies of space and equipment in the higher grades, has come a long way since the two "common schools" mentioned as being in Pearisburg in 1832, and the expenditure for education of "poor" children in that year of \$281.66. Although it is difficult for our newer residents to realize the fact, the majority of Giles County's school buildings have been constructed within the past fifteen years.

These modern brick elementary schools, in practically every Town and hamlet within the County, have replaced the old one-room wooden "schoolhouse" which was prevalent at the time the Celco plant of Celanese Corporation of America was built in 1939.

One of these old buildings still stands near the First Christian Church in Narrows; another is still in use as a church at Fletcher's.



ONE-ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE

This monument to a by-gone era still stands in Narrows near the First Christian Church.

## ***Giles County and Pearisburg Both Founded in 1806; Their Histories As County and County Seat Linked***

PEARISBURG'S HISTORY is closely linked with that of Giles County since both sprang into existence at virtually the same time. We have shown that the County was created in 1806, and that the first Court met in the same year in a house adjacent to the dwelling of Capt. George Pearis, near where Pearisburg station now stands.

Captain Pearis, whose ancestors were Huguenots who originally settled in South Carolina, offered the new County a 53-acre tract of land, timber and stone necessary to erect the county buildings. This offer was accepted by the Court, and Andrew Johnston was designated to survey the land, and so the new County Seat was named Pearisburg in honor of the man whose liberal gift made possible its location in the shadow of beautiful Angel's Rest Mountain.

ALTHOUGH BORN in South Carolina, Captain Pearis settled near Pearisburg in 1782, having three years previously purchased for seventy pounds Sterling (about \$340) a tract of 340 acres of land on New River from its owner Capt. William Ingles.

The founder of Pearisburg saw some service during the Revolutionary War and was severely wounded in a battle with the Tories on the Yadkin River in North Carolina. Pearis erected his home on the land which was later owned by W. H. Thomas, a pioneer Pearisburg merchant, and two or three years later opened up a small retail store and established a ferry across New River.

David and Andrew Johnston (the surveyors of the land) were the first merchants and opened the first tannery in Pearisburg. The first resident physician was Dr. John H. Rutter, the first tailor was W. C. Charlton, and David Straley and John Fillinger were the first blacksmiths.

### ***Scene of Civil War Battle***

During the Civil War Pearisburg was the scene of a skirmish in which the Confederate forces lost two killed and four wounded, and the Union troops lost two killed and six wounded.

The Federal troops under Major Cromley had occupied the town on May 6, 1862, and the next evening the remainder of the regiment, in charge of Col. Rutherford B. Hayes, who later became president of the U. S., arrived.

Major William McKinley, also a future president of the United States, was also a member of this regiment and was in Pearisburg during the engagement.

The Federal forces, who were "quite pleased with the beautiful and romantic country, and the polite and educated people," were, on May 10, completely surprised by the Confederate forces led by General Heath, and were forced to flee the country after a brief skirmish on Dill's Hill.

General Heath pursued the retreating Federals into Mercer County, and Pearisburg suffered no further invasion.

As the Union army retreated, a soldier dropped behind in order to set fire to the Presbyterian Church, but he paid for

the deed with his life when a Confederate sniper picked him off.

The faithful women of Pearisburg extinguished the fire and as a result the church was only slightly damaged.

Following the skirmish the Courthouse at Pearisburg was converted into a hospital to care for the sick and the wounded, and the women of the town hurried to the battlefield with sheets and bandages to care for the injured. Several soldiers died in the improvised hospital, and with the two who were killed in action now rest in the old graveyard at the foot of Angel's Rest Mountain.

### ***Oldest Newspaper***

Pearisburg has had a weekly newspaper since the summer of 1857 when John Sowers bought a few cases of type, an old press and started issuing "The Southwest," in a building that stood not far from the present Courthouse.

The paper was continued until the outbreak of the Civil war when, because of the difficulty of procuring newsprint and other interferences it was suspended. (Some newspapers during the Great Conflict resorted to printing on the back or "white" side of wallpaper, but apparently even this commodity was not to be had in Pearisburg at that time.)

SOWERS resumed publication of his newspaper on July 23, 1866, renaming it The Pearisburg Gazette and employing as editor a talented Englishman, H. W. Broderick, who was at that time county clerk.

The Gazette was acquired on July 31, 1869, by A. L. Fry, who for many years served as railroad station agent at Pearisburg and Glen Lyn. Two years later, Mr. Fry sold the paper to T. J. Pearson, a pioneer Pearisburg merchant.

Between 1871 and 1904 the paper underwent several changes in ownership and its name was changed to The Pearisburg Virginian. The weekly was purchased in 1904 by Thomas C. Johnston, father of the late Pearson M. Johnston.

Tom Johnston had learned his trade in the Virginian Shop and had owned the paper on two previous occasions, and he was to continue in ownership and operation until his death in June 1930 when Pearson, who had virtually grown up in the newspaper office, took it over and during his lifetime expanded the newspaper's influence as well as built a considerable job printing business.

Pearson Johnston, afflicted with ill health in his later years, reluctantly retired after selling the newspaper to local businessmen headed by Clarence Taylor and Marvin Lucas, but his services as adviser and "trouble-shooter" were in demand until the time of his death.

### ***Pearisburg An Old Town***

*The following article by Mr. Goodridge Wilson appeared recently in his column, THE SOUTHWEST CORNER, which is a regular feature of the editorial page in THE ROANOKE TIMES each Sunday.*

*By GOODRIDGE WILSON*

PEARISBURG, beautifully located New River town nestling in the shadow of Angel's Rest, is, in chronological order of establishment the eleventh county seat town of Southwest Virginia. This town, the town of Paris in Kentucky, and Parris Island in South Carolina, where Marines received boot

training in World War II, all derive their name from the same French family, the last two with corrupted spelling.

The family was established on the island off the coast of South Carolina about 1710 when a French Huguenot refugee named Alexander Pearis settled there. He became a colonel and a very prominent man in the early history of the Palmetto State. Some sixty years later three of his descendants moved to the New River Valley from South Carolina.

They were Melinda, wife of Samuel Pepper who started Pepper's Ferry, and her two brothers, George and Robert Alexander Pearis. The brothers married sisters, daughters of Joseph Howe, another settler of the New River Valley.

About 1790 Robert Alexander moved with his family to Kentucky, where a town was named after him with the "e" left out of the name. George stayed in the New River country and had a town named after him with the "e" kept in the name.

Another descendant of Colonel Alexander Pearis of Parris Island was Richard Pearis, an Indian trader on the Holston River in the seventeen fifties whose name appears frequently in Governor Dinwiddie's French and Indian War correspondence. He figures in Southwest Virginia history as captain of a company of Cherokee Indians on the Sandy River Expedition against the Shawnee Indians in 1756.

### ***A Captain in the Militia***

GEORGE PEARIS was a militia captain in the Revolutionary War and commanded a company under Major Joseph Cloyd in the Battle of the Shallow Ford of the Yadkin River in North Carolina on October 14, 1780. In that fight he received a severe wound that prevented him from performing further military service. Soon after Captain Pearis returned from the expedition to the Yadkin his wife, the former Eleanor Howe, died. His second wife was Rebecca Clay, daughter of Mitchell Clay.

In 1782 Captain Pearis moved to a tract of land he had purchased from William Ingles, on a part of which the town of Pearisburg is built.

### ***Court Was at Christiansburg***

Citizens of Montgomery County residing down New River into the present West Virginia found going to Christiansburg to transact court business burdensome and costly. So in January 1806 the legislature created a new county in that region composed of parts of Montgomery, Monroe and Tazewell counties, which extended down the river for a hundred miles and took in some territory on head streams of Coal River and Guyandotte River as well.

The new county was named in honor of William B. Giles who was one of Thomas Jefferson's chief lieutenants and who was governor of Virginia from 1827 to 1830. The first county court of Giles was held on the 13th day of May, 1806, in a building on Captain George Pearis's farm. The justices were George Pearis, Thomas Shannon, Christian Snidow, David Johnston, Edward McDonald, Isaac Chapman, John Kirk, John Peck, Christopher Champ, John Burke and James Bane.

Captain George Pearis donated fifty-three acres of land to the county for its public buildings, and the town that was

laid off on this land was named in his honor. The picture of the first court house of Giles County in Johnston's History of The Middle New River Settlements shows it as a square log building.

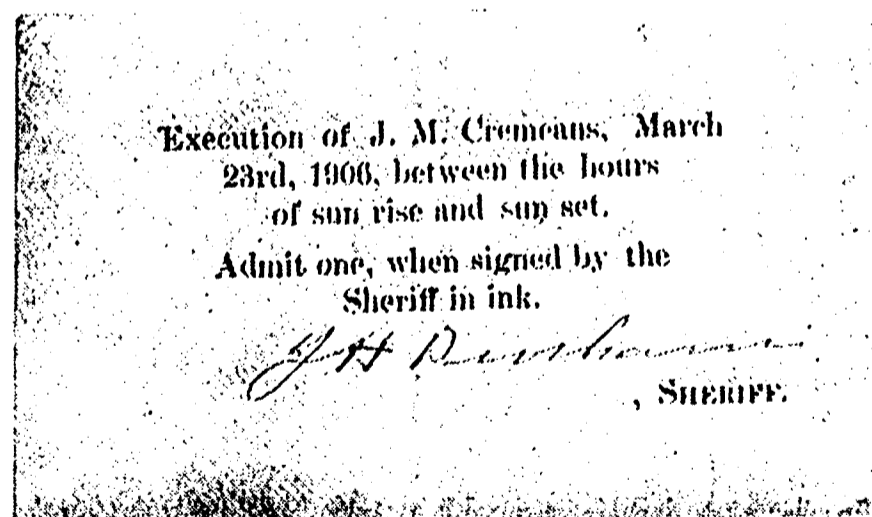
HOWE'S HISTORY OF VIRGINIA, published in 1845, says: "Parisburg, (sic) or Giles C. H., lies 238 miles southwesterly from Richmond, three-fourths of a mile from the bank of New River, just above where it passes through Peter's mountain. The situation of the town is picturesque, being at the extremity of a mountain called 'Angel's Rest'."

### ***Skirmish Left Hayes Wounded***

In May of 1862 a skirmish was fought at Pearisburg between an Ohio regiment of Federal troops and Confederates under General Henry Heath. The Federals were commanded by Col. Rutherford B. Hayes, who became President of the United States. Colonel Hayes had been sent with his regiment from Princeton to occupy the village. He arrived in Pearisburg on May 7, 1862.

On the 8th in his report to Colonel Scammon he, among other things in speaking of Pearisburg and its people, says: "this is a lovely spot, a fine clean village, most beautiful and romantic surrounding country; polite and educated . . . people." When Colonel Hayes and his regiment were driven out of the village on May 10 he sustained a slight wound.

While court was in session on Monday, May 31, 1897, Pearisburg experienced a moderately severe earthquake. The judge summarily adjourned court, jumped over a railing and ran out of the room along with the lawyers and spectators. A number of chimneys were toppled and some brick walls and other masonry were cracked. The shocks were felt throughout Giles and adjoining counties and in other parts of Southwest Virginia. Metropolitan papers carried lurid and grossly exaggerated accounts of the damage caused.



The hanging of Mr. Cremeans, which took place on the courthouse grounds at Pearisburg, was enough of a social event to require admission by invitation. Cremeans had killed a man named Kidd at Glen Lyn. John Durham was the sheriff, and the scaffold was erected by E. W. Wilburn. The invitation card pictured above was loaned by Roy Witten.

## *The Town of Narrows*



It was to be nearly a hundred years after Giles County was formed and its first court was convened near what is now Bluff City before Narrows got around to obtaining a charter as an incorporated Town. This view, taken in 1903, shows that the village at the mouth of Wolf Creek was already a bustling

metropolis. The few landmarks which still remain are The First Christian Church (upper right center) and the Odd Fellows Hall (left center) which later burned and has since been rebuilt. Of the Snowflake Tannery building on the hill, once a major industry, only the brick boiler house still stands.

## **Early Beginnings of Narrows . . .**

GEOLOGISTS TELL us that millions of years ago Giles County was a high plateau, across which a sluggish river was winding its way northward. As ages passed, with tireless energy this river wore down the mountain barriers that lay in its path. One of those barriers through which that river cut its way, lies about a mile below the mouth of Wolf Creek. This was described by early explorers as The Narrows of New River. Later on the little town which grew up at the mouth of Wolf Creek was called The Narrows and still later Narrows.

Among the early settlers in this community was Matthew French who built his home several miles up Wolf Creek about

1775. He was the ancestor of the French families through this section. His descendants include Mrs. J. B. Givens, Mrs. P. L. Killey and the late K. S. French, all of Narrows.

In the spring of 1778 Moredock O. McKensy settled at the mouth of Wolf Creek near the present site of the stock pens. A few weeks later, while the father and eldest son were away from home, the Indians attacked the family and killed the mother and three children. Two young daughters, Margaret and Elizabeth, were captured. They were captives for eighteen years during which time Margaret was transferred by the Shawnees to the Delaware tribe and was adopted by the Indian chief Koothumpum. Several years before Margaret returned, a young Indian chief fell desperately in love with her but she



Main Street, Narrows, looking East, in about 1905. The building on the right with the small cupola was the original

refused to marry him. When he continued to annoy her with his ardent love making, she fled to a distant village and sought the protection of her Indian foster sister and brother. The young chief followed and attempted to kill Margaret, but he was thwarted in his purpose by the young Indian woman who gave him a sound whipping and sent him on his way.

Finally, Margaret and Elizabeth were able to return home. They married young men from the neighboring counties of Mercer & Monroe, where they have a number of descendants.

Joseph Hare and Edward Hale came into the New River settlements in 1779. Both had been soldiers in the American Revolution. Joseph Hare settled at the mouth of Wolf Creek near the McKensy home. Edward Hale settled on Wolf Creek

Methodist Church. The first home of the First National Bank was in the second building up from Monroe Street.

near the present Giles Recreation Park. He is the ancestor of the Hales in Giles and Mercer Counties. Grants to the land on which most of South Narrows is built were made to Edward Hale and his son Charles Hale. These land grants are now in possession of the Herbert Hale family and bear the signatures of Richard Henry Lee, Edmund Randolph and Thomas Randolph, Governors of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The oldest document was dated 1793.

The first dwelling house in Narrows was built by Charles Hale and stood on the site of the present Hale home on Bland and Kimmerling Streets. It was a two story building of logs; the kitchen built a short distance from the house, was also made of logs. The slave cabins at the back were about fifty yards from the big "house".



NARROWS IN 1930



One of the earliest important industries in Giles County was the tannery due to the abundance of tanbark available in the territory; even today, at Bluff City the Leas and McVitty Tannery is an important part of the County's economy. But back in 1898, the Snowflake Tannery at Narrows was a flourishing institution, even though only its brick boiler house remains today as a monument to the past. In the photo above, employees of the Tannery which had been established by Thomas Cover in 1895 were seated, first row (left to right)

Unknown, George Wheeler, Charles Camper, Sam Johnson, H. Fizer, Tom Bown, John Topper, A. B. Glenn, Les'e Reamer, Jake Lemon, Walter Martin. Standing, second row: Bub Hale, Bob Hale, Dave Alexander, Unknown, J. Nelson, John Brill, Unknown, Asa Blankenship, Charles Munsey, J. E. Hammer, Joe Baker. Third row: Unknown, Charles Lineweaver, Charles Renner, Clayton Burns, Rufus Johnson, Unknown, Pole Rowland, Thomas Hott, Unknown, Porter Ginn, Unknown, J. Blankenship.

In the War Between the States (1861-1865), Narrows was of strategic importance. From Tannery Hill the Confederates were able to keep a lookout in three directions. On this hill, not many yards from Mrs. Pearl Colley's present home can be seen the old breast-works which were built to guard the approach from the North by way of the Falls. Southern soldiers were quartered here to guard against Union soldiers passing through to cut the railroad line between Dublin and Bristol and also to prevent the capture of the salt works at Saltville. The Confederate soldiers were encamped in the fields near the high-school campus for one or more winters.

An incident of the war related by the late D. F. Hale, Sr., was that as a boy of thirteen years, he crossed the large hill on the opposite side of Wolf Creek from Hotel Narrows and from a hiding place behind a tree, watched the execution of three Confederate deserters. This scene made a lasting impression on the boy's memory.

## The Narrows Post Office . . .

ON JANUARY 21, 1873, an application for a post office at Narrows was being considered by the Post Office Department. A request from Franklin N. Priddy, proposed postmaster, that the name Narrows be changed to North View

was refused because there was another town in Virginia by that name. The post office at Narrows was to be on a mail route between Dublin, Virginia and White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. Dublin was the nearest railroad point at that time.

The first post office was established in Narrows on February 14, 1873.

The name Narrows was changed to Intermont on October 24, 1891 and back to Narrows on November 25, 1895.

Names of post-masters and their appointments were:

Franklin N. Priddy	February 14, 1873
Harrison K. Fizer	July 2, 1889
Mrs. Jennie Fizer	September 12, 1890
Mrs. Virginia C. Fizer	October 13, 1890
John L. Boggess	December 28, 1893
William A. French	May 22, 1897
Charles W. Shannon	April 23, 1901
John E. Hopkins	May 25, 1905
Clarence H. Johnson	April 14, 1914
George L. Bane	January 9, 1919
O. Hoge Hopkins	October 1, 1923
Harold W. Hale	1935
William E. Martin (Temporary Apt.)	1955



Recent triumphs of the Giles County Band call to the minds of old timers that the County has always been noted for the excellence of its musical organizations. In the photos above are two Narrows bands. The upper photo, made about 1904, shows (left to right) Charles Gott, Charles Fant, James Charlton, Charles Lineweaver, Harry Johnson, Hunt Brown, Bill Johnson, Charles Munsey, Bob Johnson, Leslie Beamer,

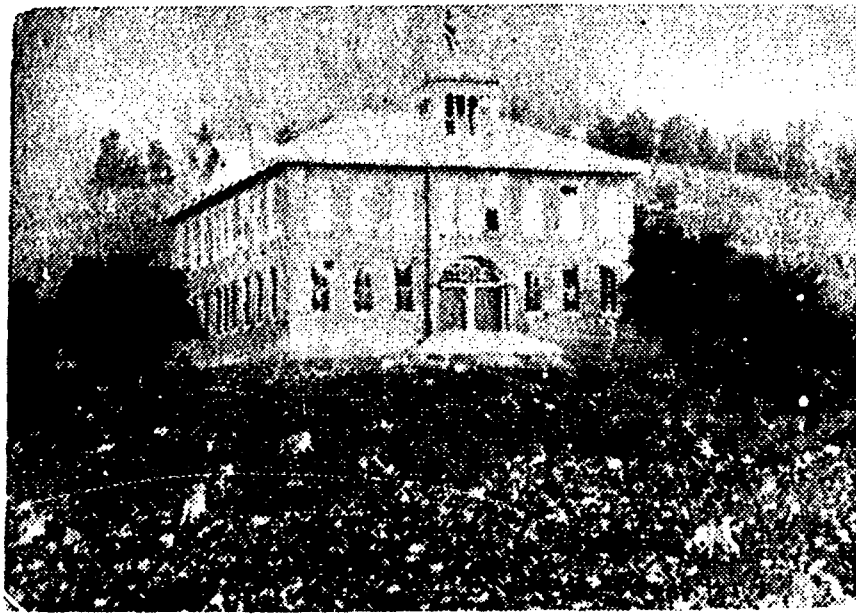
Charles Shannon and Thomas Hott. The lower photo, made about 1898, First row (left to right) Hayden Johnson, Clarence Wheeler, Oakley French, Charles Shannon, Charles Fant, Ward French, Henry Wheeler, Spencer Johnson. Second row: Mr. Light, director; Thomas Hott, Bob Johnson, Ped Givens, Bob Brown, William Nelson, Clifton Johnson, Charles Fant, Sr.

## Schools in Narrows . . .

THE FIRST PUBLIC SCHOOL was taught in 1872 by Benton Hobbs, father of Mrs. Dan Hale. The school building stood near the present Norfolk and Western Station and was used for two purposes. There was a saloon in one end of the house and the school in the other end. The young school master did not have to search far to find illustrations for his temperance lessons.

The next teacher was Captain W. H. Stables, an English barrister who had come to this section from Richmond, Virginia. He was the ancestor of the Stables families of Narrows.

The next school was on Main Street near the present Odd Fellows Hall and was taught by a young man, Charles A. Brown, who devoted many years thereafter to teaching and preaching. He is affectionately remembered by his many friends as Professor Brown.



NARROWS FIRST HIGH SCHOOL

... opened in 1908; Prof. Adrien Beaumont, Principal.

The next school was on Main Street near the present home of Mrs. P. L. Killey. The teacher was Mrs. Mary Woodrum O'Keefe, sister of the late Jesse Woodrum, of Pearisburg.

Later the school was in a small building near the Christian Church. The last session of school in that building was taught by Miss Fredonia Beamer, who later became Mrs. W. F. Ritenour. This house is still standing and was used for quite a while as a garage by Dr. E. S. Carr.

Ambitious parents who wanted their children to take up studies not offered in the one-room school sent them to Walkers Creek Academy at White Gate, or later on, to Pearisburg Academy. Still others sent their daughters to the Masonian Institute, a girls' school operated by Captain D. W. Mason at the old Mason home between Ripplemead and Pearisburg.

By this time the town had outgrown the one room school-house. About this time the old Methodist Church building on Monroe Street near the present Mick-or-Mack store had discontinued as a place of worship so this was made into a two-room school by building a partition. This was soon outgrown and a second story was added. A short time later two more rooms were added. Among the early teachers were: D. S. Hankla, D. F. Hale, Luther D. Shumate, John French and Miss Allie Mahood of Pearisburg who later became Mrs. Porter Ginn, mother of Mrs. Claude Blackburn, of Narrows.

In 1908 a new building of concrete blocks was erected on a hill overlooking the town on land donated by Herbert Hale. This was the finest school building in the county at the time and Narrows was justly proud of it. In a few years a brick building was erected nearby to take care of the increasing demands for more rooms.

In 1931 the present high school building was erected, and



NARROWS HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1932

First row, left to right—Osby Riffe, Myrtle Tipton, Dorothy Robertson, Edna Lucas, Watts Hopkins, Ellen Tiller, K. C. Turner. Second row—W. H. Barrett, Principal; Glenn Hoff, Homer Hoff, David Cadle, Mildred Joyner.



1920-21 GILES COUNTY CHAMPIONS

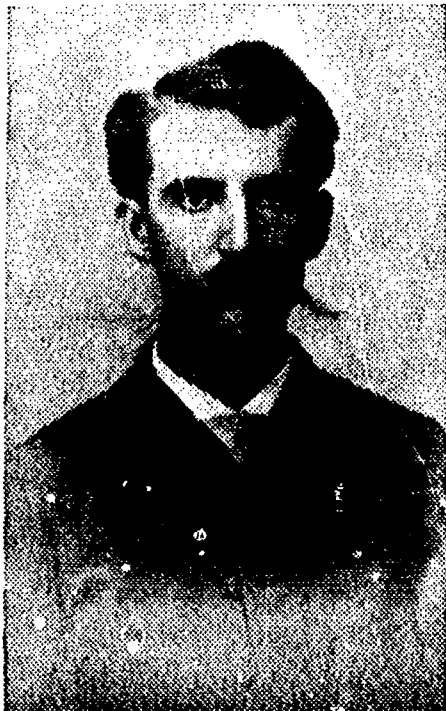
... the Narrows basketball team. First row, left to right: E. E. McGinley, Leslie Ritenour, Robert L. Wheeler. Center row, K. P. Birkhead, principal. Second row—Lake Brill, Wilbur Hale, Livingstone Dillow, Leonard Cunningham and Stanley Bailey.

the other two school buildings were used for primary and elementary grades. In 1941, on Christmas Day, the brick building on the hill was burned. The children were housed in temporary buildings until 1949 when the beautiful new grade school was completed.



NARROWS SCHOOL ABOUT 1900, located on Monroe Street. First row, left to right: Trixie Martin, George Martin, Nell Hale, Lucy Buckland, Ed Lambert,—Garrett, Jo and Raymond Topper, Bob Blackburn, Oscar and Carl Dillow, Clyde Day, George White, Dan Hale, Spence Johnson, Earl Skeens, H. Hare, Kent French, Martia Lent and Russ Champ. Second row: Bernard Johnson, Henry Hale, Lon Coburn, Walter Garrett, Rowland Hale, Sid Buckland, Frank French, John Lambert, Dave Tiller, Mamie Bowles, Eva Johnson,

Clyde Waldron, Rushie Johnson, Myrtle Waldron, Elmer White, and Earl Johnson. Third row: Emaretta Robertson, Elsie Blackburn, Harry Wheeler, Clyde Lucas, George Tiller, Grover Lucas, Arthur Wheeler, Minnie French, Myrtle Albert, Lucas Martin, Lucy Johnson, Ethel Albert, Grover Johnson, Nina White, Forrest White, Rosie Stables, Unknown, Lillie Hale, Daisy Hale, Grace Hare. Fourth row: Bessie Waldron, Chris Robertson, Robert Waldron, Luther Buckland, Prof. D. F. Hale, Dale Gray.



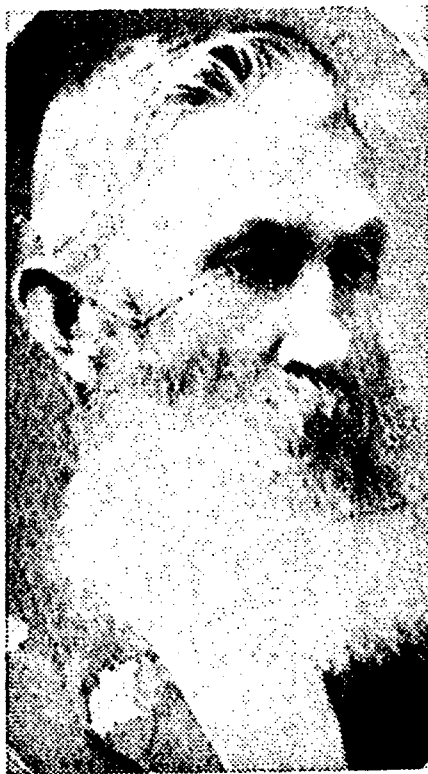
HERBERT W. HALE

... benefactor whose generous gifts included land for schools and churches; through his efforts, Narrows emerged from a frontier settlement to an established community.



THE 1916 GRADUATING CLASS

... of Narrows High School included—first row, left to right—Pauline Ritenour, Grey Flizer, Alleeta Rowland, Flo Glenn, Leila Hott, Inez Hale. Second row—George Dillow, Mac H. Johnson, Prof. James R. Stafford, instructor; O. Hoge Hopkins and J. B. Shrader.



REV. JAMES JOHNSON

... founder of the First Christian (Disciples) Church of Narrows. A fine preacher, he was a good carpenter, blacksmith and farmer; much of the building of this church he did himself.

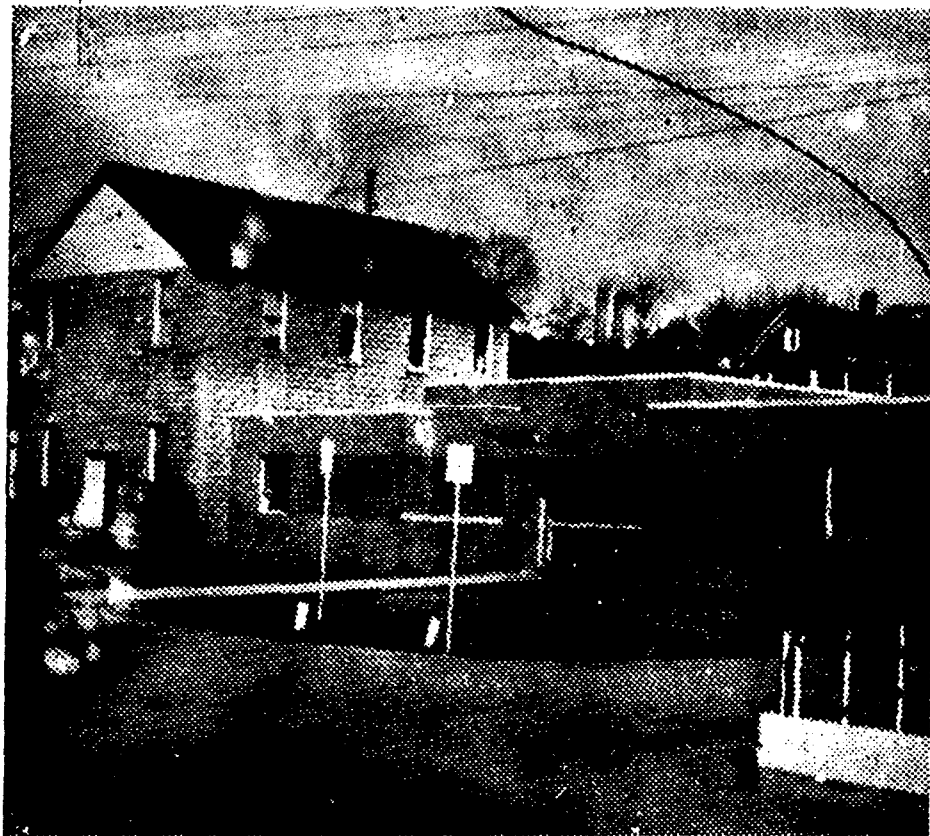


NARROWS SIXTH GRADE— 1921-22

First row, left to right—Robert Heslep, Helen Hale, Mason Wheeler, William Heslep, Mary Day, Constance Charlton, Dorothy Gearheart, Evelyn Martin, Buster Givens; Lelia Hott, Teacher. Second row—Olga Linsenmeyer, Lena Stables, Emmett Richardson, Lee Pence, Frank Hoback, Mary Davis Adair, Jack Topper, Evelyn Shockey, James Adair, Jr., Clara Martin. Third row—Marie Bonham, Frances Coburn, Ellene Coburn, Zella French, Evelyn Fleeman, Gladys Johnson, Hazel Campbell, Anna Lee Coburn. Fourth row—Martin Hale, Marvin Blankenship, Moman Wilkinson, Alfred Blankenship, Kathryn Bane.

### Town's First Charter in 1904

THE FIRST CHARTER for the town of Narrows was approved by the Virginia Legislature on March 14, 1904. This was repealed and a new charter issued on March 24, 1920.



The New and the Old—1953

Again on January 30, 1947 Narrows received a new charter; this 1947 charter was amended March 31, 1948 to provide for a City Manager.

Narrows has increased its area twice since its incorporation in 1904. North Narrows was incorporated by Court decree on January 24, 1944. Another extension brought in the Orchard Hill section on the north side of Wolf Creek and the Reservoir section on the south side of Narrows in June, 1950.

Narrows has given up territory only once—and that this year (1956), when the Town Council passed an ordinance de-annexing the land across Wolf Creek, from the E. A. Hopkins land to the New River. This was done to get rid of the bridge connecting Water Street with the Old Lurich Road; Maintenance of this bridge, heavily used because of the Giles County Stockyards, has long been a bone of contention between the Town and the State Highway Commission.

The installation of the sewage system was begun in August 1950 and completed in February 1952.

Narrows first Municipal Building was a two-story structure of concrete blocks erected in 1921. It was razed in 1953.

The new Municipal Building of brick which is modern in design was erected in 1950. It houses the town offices, the Public Library, an auditorium and a kitchen.

### Intermont . . .

EARLY IN JANUARY 1891, a group of forward-looking men envisioned a great future for the tiny village of Narrows situated at the mouth of Wolf Creek. With beautiful surroundings, abundant water power, vast stretches of

timber, untouched mineral resources, this spot seemed an ideal place for industrial development. So the Intermont Mining, Manufacturing and Development Company was organized. In this Company were several wellknown citizens of Southwest Virginia among whom were W. A. French, D. A. French, F. B. Priddy, David E. Johnston, S. W. Williams. There were several capitalists from Eastern Virginia interested in the enterprise, among whom was Moses Thalheimer of Richmond.

This Company was to have a capital stock of not less than \$100,000 and not more than \$2,000,000 (Shares at \$100 each).

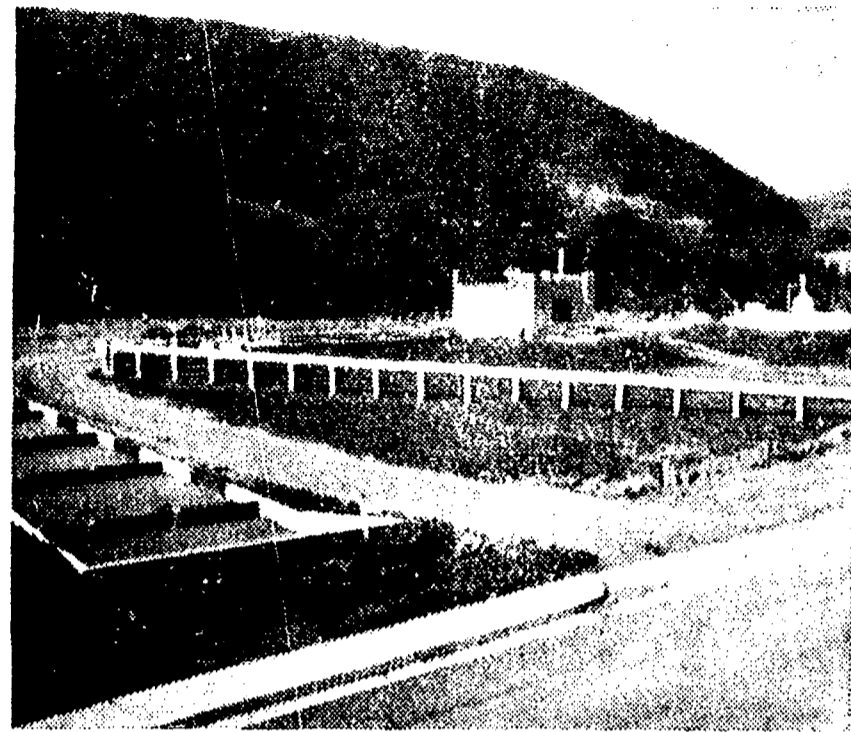
Since the name Narrows was more descriptive than euphonious, the company decided to give the town a new start with a new name. Accordingly the name Intermont meaning "among or between the mountains", was given the town. Narrows Postoffice was officially changed to Intermont on October 24, 1891.

Intermont seemed on the verge of undreamed-of prosperity; the lumbering industry flourished and real estate values boomed. Then something happened to Intermont, possibly it was the financial depression of 1893 under Cleveland's administration. At any rate their high hopes did not materialize and on November 25, 1895 the post-office once more became Narrows.

### **Narrows Water System**

THE FIRST WATER system of any kind in this town was a small line, put in about 1895 by the Union Tanning Company, which supplied the needs of a few people who lived along the line of East Narrows.

About 1923 J. Frank Heslep, as the chief instigator, and others promoted a small corporation to develop a water system. The shares were \$100 each. Mr. Heslep was elected manager and was also the contractor for the construction of the reservoir and distribution lines. He held this position for ten years.

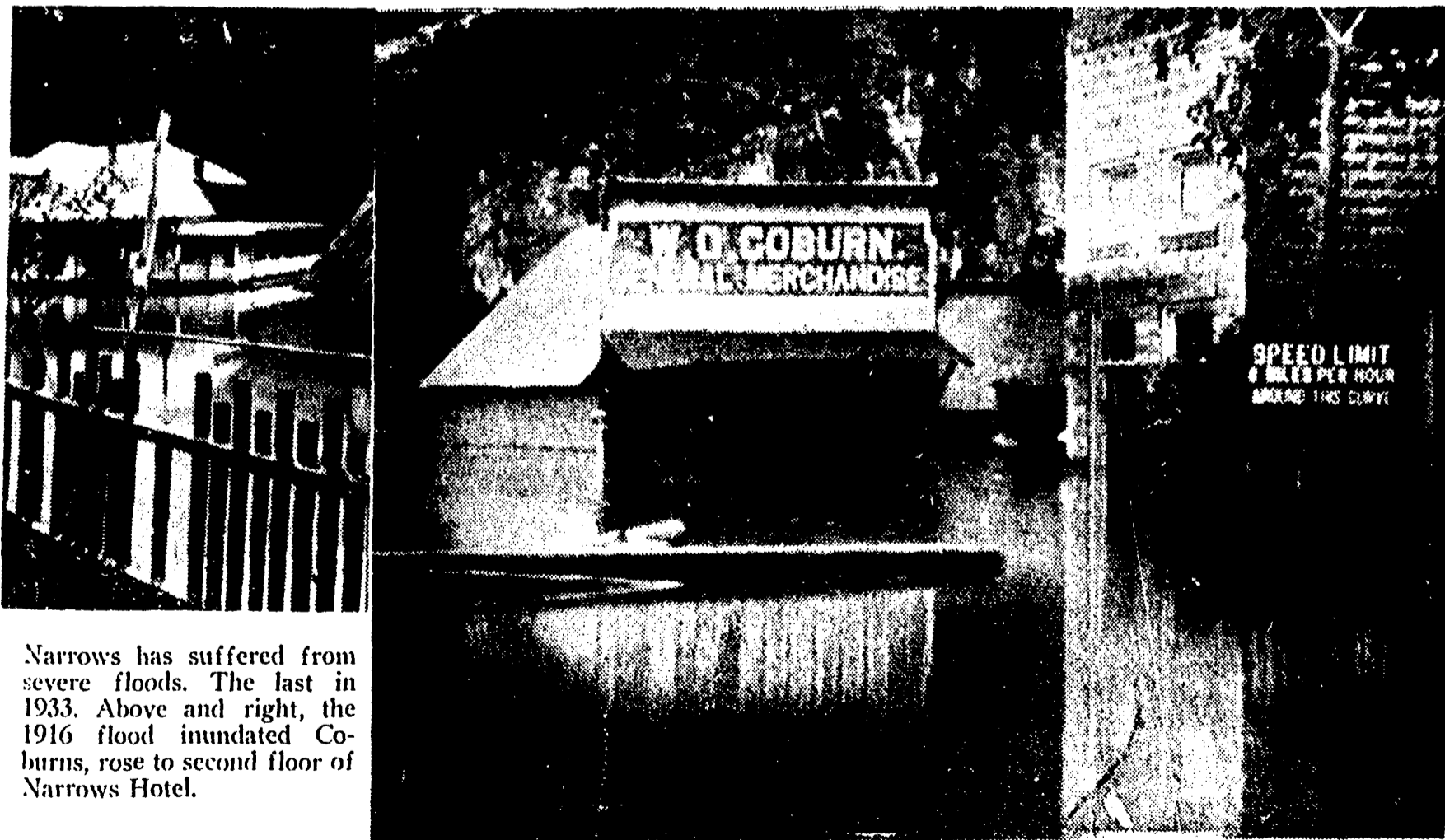


SEWAGE DISPOSAL PLANT

*Commended by the State as a model installation for its size.*

During that time the system was extended to most parts of town and across the river to North Narrows.

Being limited financially it was decided to sell the Company's holdings and water rights to the city. The transaction took place in the early 1930's. Since that time the system has been gradually extended and other sources of supply produced. Some years ago a well was dug in Highland Park; in 1953 a deep well was sunk on the north side of Wolf Creek to augment the supply to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding community.



Narrows has suffered from severe floods. The last in 1933. Above and right, the 1916 flood inundated Coburns, rose to second floor of Narrows Hotel.



"Aunt Lyn" Rowland



## Lynea Rowland . . .

THE HISTORY of Narrows would be incomplete without a tribute to Mrs. Lynea Hale Rowland (1842-1915), called by old and young, black and white, "Aunt Lyn." She was perhaps the most widely known and best loved woman in the community.

There were few doctors in this section before the turn of the century, so Aunt Lyn assumed the role of a midwife and officiated at the birth of most of the children in this section for more than a generation.

The weather was never too stormy nor the night too dark for her to take her lantern and go on foot or by horse-back into the hills where there was illness or death.

Being of an industrious nature, and endowed with tireless energy, she had little patience with idle hands. She did not hesitate to enlist the aid of her frequent visitors in whatever task she happened to be employed at the time. As a source of income, she wove rag carpets on a large, old time, hand loom.

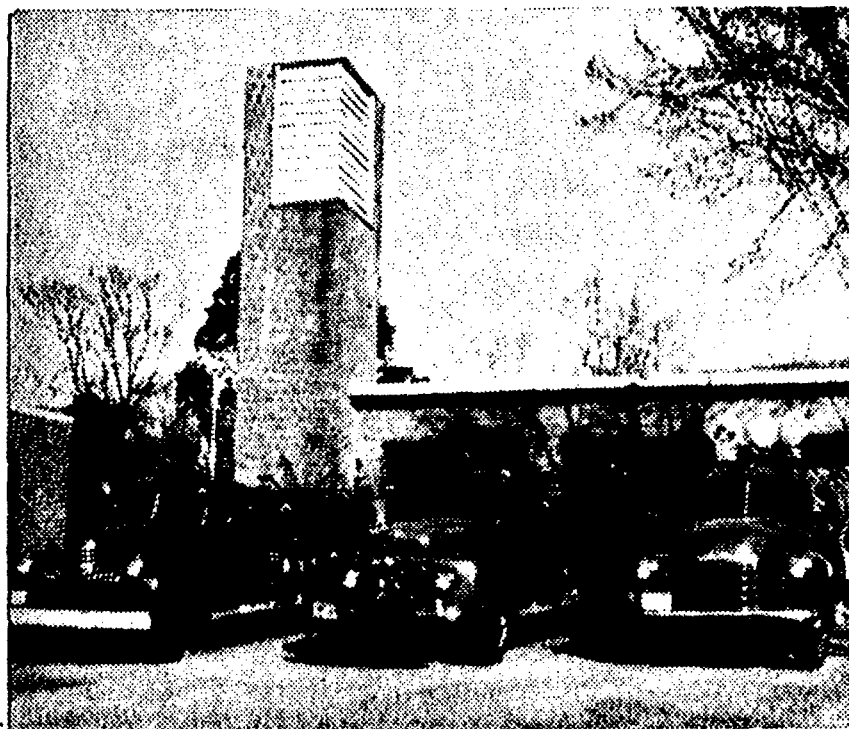
Aunt Lyn was a life long Methodist of the shouting type and thoroughly enjoyed her religion. She always sat in the "amen corner" of the church. It is said that she sometimes dozed during the sermon. She was a woman of high ideals and adhered to a strict code of morals, yet she possessed an understanding and sympathy for those of weaker character. She made no distinction in her loving ministry to all classes. Her memory is indelibly enshrined in the hearts of all who knew her.

## Narrows Fire Department

WORDS CAN never express the debt of gratitude that Narrows owes to its Fire Department. The history of this organization has been one of ups and downs. With each disastrous fire in the past fifty-five years the town became more keenly aware of its need for adequate protection. In spite of the fact that Narrows literally had "water, water everywhere" there was little progress in fire protection for many years after the town was incorporated.

The first protection other than a bucket brigade was furnished by the Union Tanning Company which was built in 1895 on Tannery Hill. The tannery had a pipe line laid from a small dam on Dry Branch (Mill Creek) at the Pine Tree Spring near the E. B. Pruitt home. This line furnished water as well as fire protection for the tannery and a few homes. The tannery whistle was the town's fire alarm for many years. This whistle also served as an alarm clock for the entire community—blowing to awaken the families as well as to call the men to work.

In 1925 a water company was organized, thus making running water available to a larger area. Portable hose reels were purchased from the tannery and kept in small fire houses in various parts of the town. The reels had to be



NARROWS FIRE DEPARTMENT

*A well equipped and well manned company.*

moved by hand when there was a fire. About this time a volunteer fire department was organized with Walton Pence as fire chief. This group did an excellent job with the available equipment.

In 1925 this department erected a fire siren at the rear of the Christian Church. The alarm was sounded by Mrs. Nannie Beamer who was telephone operator at that time. After her home ceased to be the telephone central office she continued to sound the fire alarm for the town until it was moved to a new location in 1950. This group disbanded about 1929.

In 1933 the town bought a small pickup truck on which was mounted a gasoline powered pump. This was used for several years. In the 1940's Chief of Police, A. W. McNeil, had charge of the fire service.

With the Celanese Plant in full operation and with many new families in the community, the demand for an effective fire department became urgent, so on May 16, 1947 a group of interested citizens organized the present fire company with A. L. Rotruck as the fire chief.

Since the organization this company has made rapid strides in providing modern fire fighting apparatus and creating one of the best volunteer fire companies in the State.

In 1951 a fire hall was built equipped with heating plant, office, workshop, a hose tower, and storage space for the trucks.

The Narrows Fire Department is affiliated with Giles County Firemen's Association which was organized March 16, 1948.

In its seven years of existence the fire company has combatted approximately 156 major fires and has saved untold thousands of dollars worth of property.

### ***Narrows Public Library***

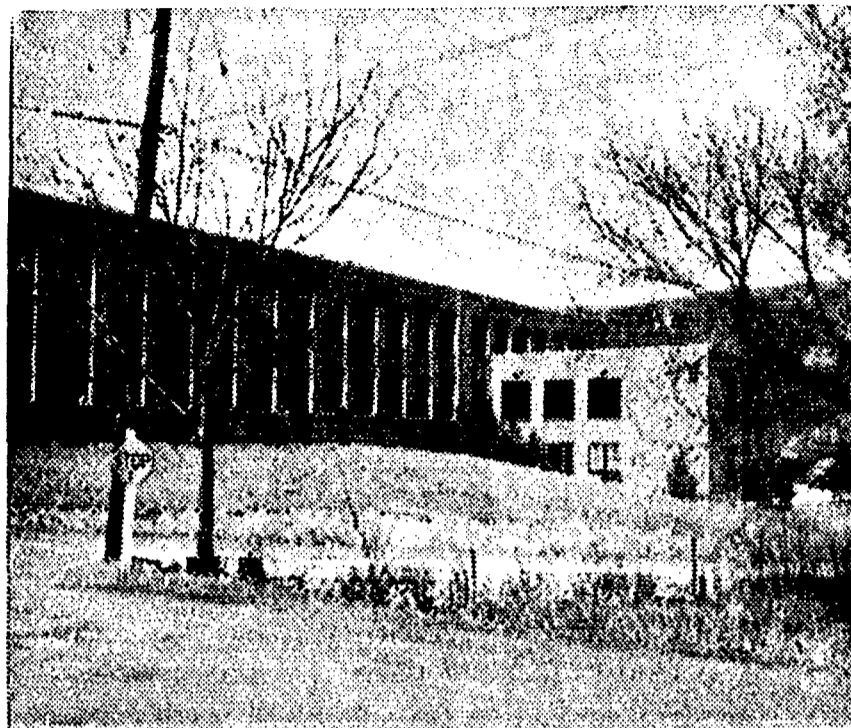
NARROWS PUBLIC LIBRARY was formerly Narrows Woman's Club Library, and was opened April 6th, 1935 in the Givens, Funeral Parlor, which was located where the B & B. Store now stands.

Mrs. Mary Hare, Funeral Parlor receptionist, was librarian. There were 95 volumes at this time.



THE NARROWS LIBRARIAN

Mrs. Killey at her desk in the Library office.



NARROWS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

*Built in 1949, eight years after fire had destroyed its predecessor.*

The idea of a library originated with Mrs. Dan Hale, who was president of the club in 1933-34-35. A program followed by a reception was given by the club members at the high school auditorium and the public was invited. The admission was a book. The books received from this program formed the nucleus for a library.

The books were then stored for lack of space, and later moved to the old Municipal Building, where a room was cleaned, painted, and equipped with shelves. The library was again opened to the public. Miss Nellie Adair was employed by the Junior and Senior Woman's Clubs as librarian and served in this capacity for several years.

In 1950 when the new Municipal Building was erected, it included a very attractive room for the library.

When the Town of Narrows assumed responsibility for the library it became the Narrows Public Library. It was then eligible for State aid and a State loan of books.

The Library personnel is composed of T. H. Moses, member of the town council and Chairman of the Library Board, Mrs. E. E. Woodson, of the Narrows Senior Woman's Club, and Mrs. E. O. Craig, Jr., of the Junior Woman's Club, Mrs. P. L. Killey, Librarian, and Mrs. W. H. Peck, Substitute.

### ***Giles Recreation Park***

In 1944 the Narrows Kiwanis Club started a movement for a playground near the school for the children of the community. A fund of \$926.80 subscribed for playground equipment could not be used because of acute shortage of material.

The project was revived in 1946 and after much discussion the location was selected at the "Boom," popular as a swimming pool for many years.

A playground was established with a picnic area nearby. So popular did the park become that the Kiwanis Club had to ask the Town Council for aid in developing the area. On May 7, 1946 a lease was obtained from Dan and Chap Hale for what is now known as the Giles Recreation Park. This land was purchased from the Hale Brothers in 1950 by the Town of Narrows.

As the park continued to grow in popularity more equipment was required. In May 1948 the Kiwanis Club spent an

additional \$431.38. Since this installation the demands have increased by leaps and bounds. The Club has since turned over each year an average of more than \$200,000 proceeds from the Annual Water Carnival.

While the Kiwanis Club has taken the lead in the development of this project, it has received the fullest measure of cooperation from the local people, the Town of Narrows, the Giles County Board of Supervisors, the Celanese Corporation of America, the Appalachian Electric Power Company, as well as other organizations and individuals throughout the county.

The Town of Narrows has assumed the maintenance of the park and pays the salary of the park supervisor. The Giles County Board of Supervisors pays the salary of a full time life guard.

The park has been well supervised by Mr. Walton Pence since 1946. It is estimated that more than 100,000 people visit the park each year.



GILES PARK



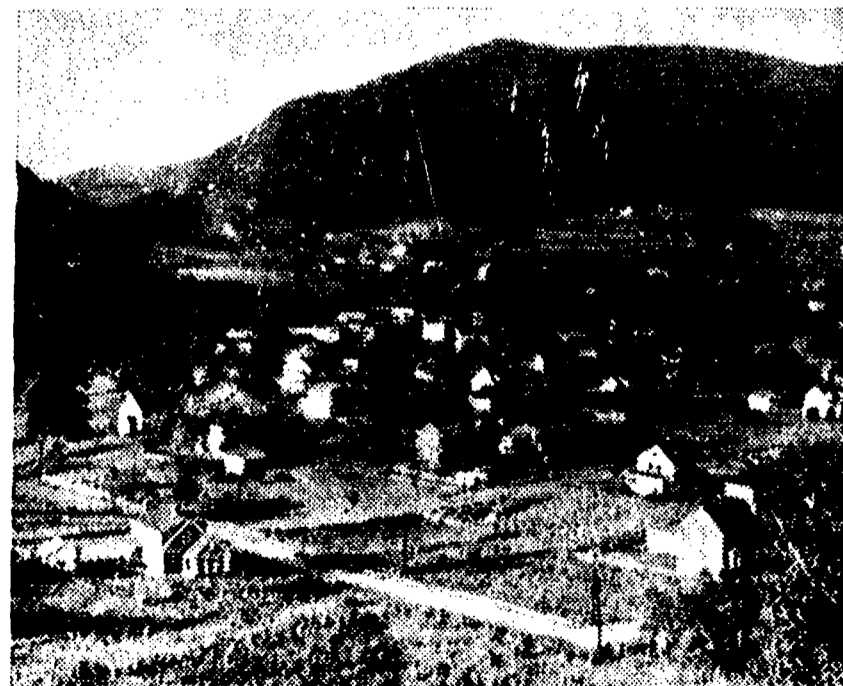
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



WOLF CREEK DAM



MEMORIAL BOULEVARD



A VIEW OF THE TOWN

### *Narrows Bank Was Established in 1905*



(Left) P. H. Hale, president, and the late A. E. Shumate whom he succeeded.

(Above) The bank moved into its present quarters in 1939; enlarged them in 1954.

### *The First National Bank of Narrows*

The nearest bank was located in Pearisburg, and in those days it was an hour's journey to the County Seat, with the added hazards of mud or dust, according to season. The idea of establishing a bank in Narrows stemmed directly from the difficulties with which its leading citizens soon found themselves faced. There were many meetings, by twos and threes, in the stores and in the post office and at the buckboards of wagons on the dusty Main street before it was decided to invite a professional organizer, a Mr. T. C. Fuller, of Kentucky, to come in and see what could be done.

There is no historical record of Mr. Fuller's reaction to his first view of Narrows as it was in that day. But it is history that he found a group of alert and progressive citizens who were ready and willing to back up their desire for a bank with cash on the barrel head. These leaders of the community included J. G. Alvis, R. M. Alvis, F. E. Bastain, John A. Adair, H. W. Hale, W. A. French, D. A. Johnston, J. G. White, J. H. Woolwine and others, and together they subscribed the substantial total of \$10,000 for capital stock.

The first officers chosen were J. G. Alvis, president; T. C. Fuller, the organizer vice president, and J. P. Brown, cashier. Thus, staffed, equipped and ready to go, The First State Bank of Narrows was opened for business on September 19, 1905.

The bank became a National Bank and member of the Federal Reserve System on Sept. 4, 1919. During its more than fifty years it has occupied three locations, moving into its present structure in 1939, which was enlarged in 1954. Since the time of its organization the bank's assets have doubled approximately each ten years, and stand at more than \$4,500,000 at the present time.

The present officers are: P. H. Hale, President; Rufus H. Shumate, Executive Vice-President and Trust Officer;

E. S. Carr, Vice President; M. P. Lawrence, Chairman of the Board; W. Don Trout, Cashier and Assistant Trust Officer.

Directors are: John A. Carr, Dentist; C. J. French, retired engineer; C. M. Hale, Treasurer of Giles County; P. H. Hale, President; M. P. Lawrence, Retired; H. D. Spangler, Farmer; Rufus H. Shumate, Vice President; James L. Warren, Attorney; and W. D. Trout, Cashier.

### *The Churches of Narrows . . .*

THE FIRST CHURCH in Narrows was Methodist and was built in the early seventies at the back of the lot on which the Mick-or-Mack store now stands. This church was promoted by Franklin N. Priddy, William Hale, Thomas Hale and others. Since it was the only church in the community all denominations worshipped there. As the church was the social center of the community as well as the religious center, it was inevitable that romance would flourish. In 1890 the church witnessed a double wedding. The contracting parties were, Robert V. Wheeler and Miss Lula Johnson; David Johnson and Miss Nellie Stables. The officiating minister was Rev. Jimmy Johnson, father of David and Miss Lula.

In 1849 wedding bells rang again. The organist in the little church was an attractive young woman, Miss Willie Fizer and the choir leader was handsome Tom Priddy. It was natural for the song leader to fall in love with the organist.

Again in 1869 there was a double wedding. This time the happy couples were John E. Hopkins and Miss Mollie Johnson, William Johnson and Miss Lacy Johnson. Again the minister in charge was Rev. Jimmy Johnson, father of two of the contracting parties, William and Mollie.

In the middle nineties, after the coming of the tannery, the town grew so rapidly that the little church was in-



MAIN STREET, NARROWS IN THE 1870's

adequate; so the Methodists built a new church on Main Street where the present church stands. When that was outgrown the present First Methodist Church was erected about 1922. Several years ago an addition was made at the rear of the building. It was on the Pearisburg Circuit until 1925 when it was made head of Narrows Circuit with Rev. C. A. Hillman as pastor. Narrows Church became a station in 1940 during the pastorate of Rev. Harrell M. Russell. The present pastor is Rev. A. N. Williams.

#### CHRISTIAN

ABOUT 1895 the First Christian Church was organized by Rev. James Johnson, known to everyone as "Uncle Jimmy." As money was not too plentiful at that time two or three years were required to complete the church building. Uncle Jimmy, being quite versatile, assisted in the work. He was not only a preacher but also a good carpenter, blacksmith and farmer.

Since the beginning the Christian Church has been famous for its singers. The Johnsons have contributed much to their church and to the entire community through their unusual musical talents. The church is presently building a splendid new structure on Memorial Boulevard.

#### PRESBYTERIAN

IN THE MEANTIME several Presbyterian and Baptist families had moved to town and having no organization of their own had aligned themselves with the Methodist and Christian churches. They made invaluable contributions to those churches.

One of the best loved ministers Giles County has ever had was Dr. Bolling Hobson, a Presbyterian. His preaching circuit included Narrows where he alternated his services between the two churches - Methodist and Christian.

The first Narrows group of Presbyterians, known as the Ladies Aid Society, was organized by Mrs. George L. Bane in 1909.

On May 28, 1913 a meeting was held at the home of Mrs. John Adair for the purpose of organizing a Presbyterian

church and making plans for erecting a building to serve said church. After several years of work the beautiful church on Memorial Boulevard was ready for dedication in April, 1922. As the congregation continued to grow it was found necessary to build an annex in 1938.

About 1940 a Sunday School was organized at Fletcher's School house by Rev. S. M. Houck and has continued to the present time. The church bought this property in 1954 as its use had been discontinued as a public school.

In 1942 a building was erected in North Narrows by the Home Mission Committee on Montgomery Presbytery with local aid. This is known as the Second Presbyterian Church. Rev. B. F. Sperow, the present pastor retires this year.

#### BAPTIST

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH was organized in 1903 with seven members. They were: Mrs. W. A. French (Nellie J.), William Shumate, Mrs. William Shumate (Mary C.), John A. Adair, Mrs. C. D. French (Annie J.), Miss Minnie French (Mrs. P. L. Killey) and Rev. J. H. Heavener, who organized the church.

The church group had the misfortune to have its early records lost in a fire which destroyed the home of Mrs. Mary Shumate, clerk at the time.

Mrs. Nellie French, shortly before her death in 1909, gave \$50.00 to establish a building fund for the church.

An Aid Society was organized in 1904 but did not last longer than two years. A second Aid Society was formed in 1909 but was of short duration. The third was organized in 1912 and continued until 1921 when it was changed to a Missionary Society.

After holding services in other churches for a number of years the Baptists were ready to lay the corner stone for their church in 1922, and soon thereafter had a church of their own. In the half century since its organization the First Baptist Church has been served by seventeen ministers including the present one, Dr. William L. Crane.

## PENTECOSTAL

THE PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS CHURCH was built on College Avenue in 1923 by Rev. R. L. Hager. In a few years the congregation outgrew this building and a new church was erected on the same site in 1942. Again in 1952 the church put on a building program at which time the church was modernized and an annex built.

This church has been very influential in the community throughout the years. At present the membership is about ninety. Rev. G. R. Jewell is the present pastor.

## CHURCH OF GOD

THE CHURCH OF GOD was organized about 1929 and a small building was erected in the Monte Vista section of town. This served a loyal active membership until 1945 when they were able to move into their new church building nearby. This church wields a great influence in the neighborhood in which it is located. Rev. L. A. Fritts is the pastor.

## Things We Talk About . . .

THE OLDER CITIZENS recall the big snow that fell near the close of the Christmas holidays in 1913. In a few hours it reached a depth of twenty-six inches. It was the record snow in the memory of any living person. The winter of 1917-18 was also a record breaker. Freezing weather and snow began the first week in December and did not thaw until March. In the meantime the ice on New River became so thick that cattle were driven across safely on it. At the "Boom" on Wolf Creek the ice ranged from sixteen to twenty inches in thickness.

The temperature dropped to 25 degrees below zero at one

time during Christmas. When the ice broke up in the spring it made a roaring noise that could be heard for a long distance.

Three times within the memory of the oldest residents New River has put on a show. The first was in 1878 and was called by the old timers, "The Big Freshet." At that time the river backed up the Wolf Creek valley for more than a mile. Then there were no bridges to be washed away, so the damage was limited.

In 1916 there was a flood and the river again backed Wolf Creek as far as the Boom. A bridge across the creek at Lent's hotel was damaged and the New River bridge was washed away. Remains of this bridge can still be seen in the river above the present structure. The second bridge was not completed for about two years. During the interval the old ferry was once more put into service.

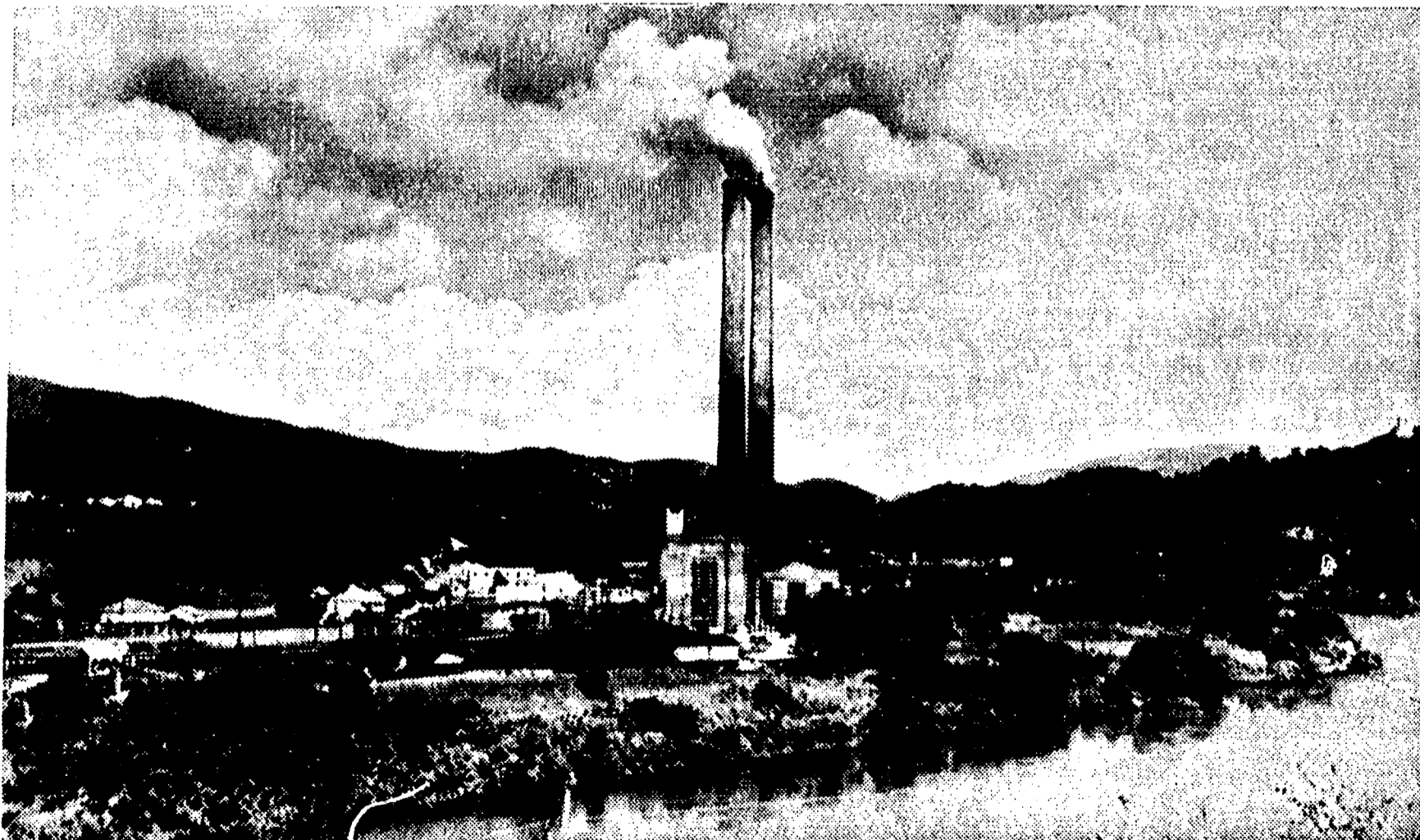
In the summer of 1940 New River went on a rampage and did a great deal of damage to business houses in down town Narrows and to the residential section on Monroe Street. The water was several feet deep on the buildings in the lower business district.

The Day house just outside the corporate limits and the Rowland house near the Park are the oldest houses in the community.

William McKinley is said to have received his commission as major in the Union Army during the Civil War while encamped at the Hare spring near the stock pens.

Older citizens consider the old Deck House located behind French's Esso Station as perhaps the oldest house in the down-town area.

The first automobiles were owned by Russell Davis, K. S. French and F. E. Bastain.



A familiar sight to travelers on Route 460 and 100 as well as on the railroad are the two tall stacks of the Virginian Railway power plant at Narrows. Completion of this plant in 1926 marked another forward step in the industrial growth

of Giles County. Electric energy from its generators feeds the Railway company's lines and supplies motive power for one of America's best engineered roads.

## The Railroads Brought Progress and Prosperity to Giles County

### *The Virginian Railway*

Along about 1900 the coal properties of Henry Huddleston Rogers actually began to burn a hole in his pocket. Probably it was at this time that he conceived the idea of building a railroad as an outlet for his coal. It has been truly said that the Virginian was the lengthened shadow of one man — H. H. Rogers.

He organized the Tidewater Railway in 1904, and began work almost immediately. The whole thing was started so quietly that its competitors, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad and the Norfolk and Western Railway, did not realize what was going on until things were well under way.

It was not necessary at that time to get permission from the Interstate Commission, so this big enterprise was able to start without much publicity. Not many were even aware that Rogers was the man behind the project. It is said that even his construction engineer, W. N. Page, professed to be ignorant of the source of his funds. The Deepwater Railway of West Virginia and Tidewater Railway of Virginia were united and incorporated as the Virginian Railway Company on March 8, 1907.

Sections of the road were completed and put into operation several years before the railway was completed as a whole by 1909. Its full length from Deepwater, West Virginia to Sewall's Point on Hampton Roads, Virginia is 443 miles.

The Virginian was a magnificent piece of engineering and construction. It was laid out so that the trains had a very slight grade to overcome, which enabled them to haul tremendous loads.

Until the Virginian was electrified, the size and power of its locomotives were progressively advanced to keep pace with its increasing traffic.

Operation of the Virginian electrification system was completed between Mullins, West Virginia and Roanoke, Virginia by September 18, 1926.

One of its large power plants of four units — 90,000 horse power was erected at Narrows, Virginia about 1924-1925 and increased by one unit in 1946.

The Virginian Railway was the first railroad in the United States to be taken over by the Federal Government during World War I because of the availability of its coal fields for the United States Navy.

Since the Virginian Power Plant was built in Narrows, Virginia there have been two superintendents; Mr. Cleve Bowser and Mr. George K. Shands.

The name Virginian Railway is geographically correct because the road crosses Virginia in almost a straight line but the whole reason for its existence lies in West Virginia and some think that perhaps it would have been more justly named the "West Virginian."

### *Norfolk and Western Railway*

The first great transportation line to penetrate Giles County was what we now know as The Norfolk and Western Railway. The story of its building reads like a romantic novel. Its early history was one of almost insurmountable difficulties which are too numerous to relate here. After years of delay its financial troubles and other handicaps were overcome and

the road then known as the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad was started at Lynchburg in 1850.

By 1852 it had reached Salem and by 1856 had been opened all the way to Bristol, a distance of 204 miles.

In the meantime the Southside Railroad was built from Lynchburg to Petersburg and later a line was opened on to Norfolk known as the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad.

In 1870 the three roads were consolidated under the corporate name of Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad. Then followed several years of struggle and hardships for the line during the Reconstruction period following the War between the States. The financial crisis of 1873 practically paralyzed the business and the line was thrown into a receivership in 1876.

In 1881 the road was bought and reorganized by the Clark interests of Philadelphia as the Norfolk and Western Railroad Company.

The early years of the road's organization and progress was largely due to the vision, initiative and energy of General William Mahone who knew no such word as failure. He was a remarkably able civil engineer as well as an organizer and promotor. He won fame as an officer in the War Between the States.

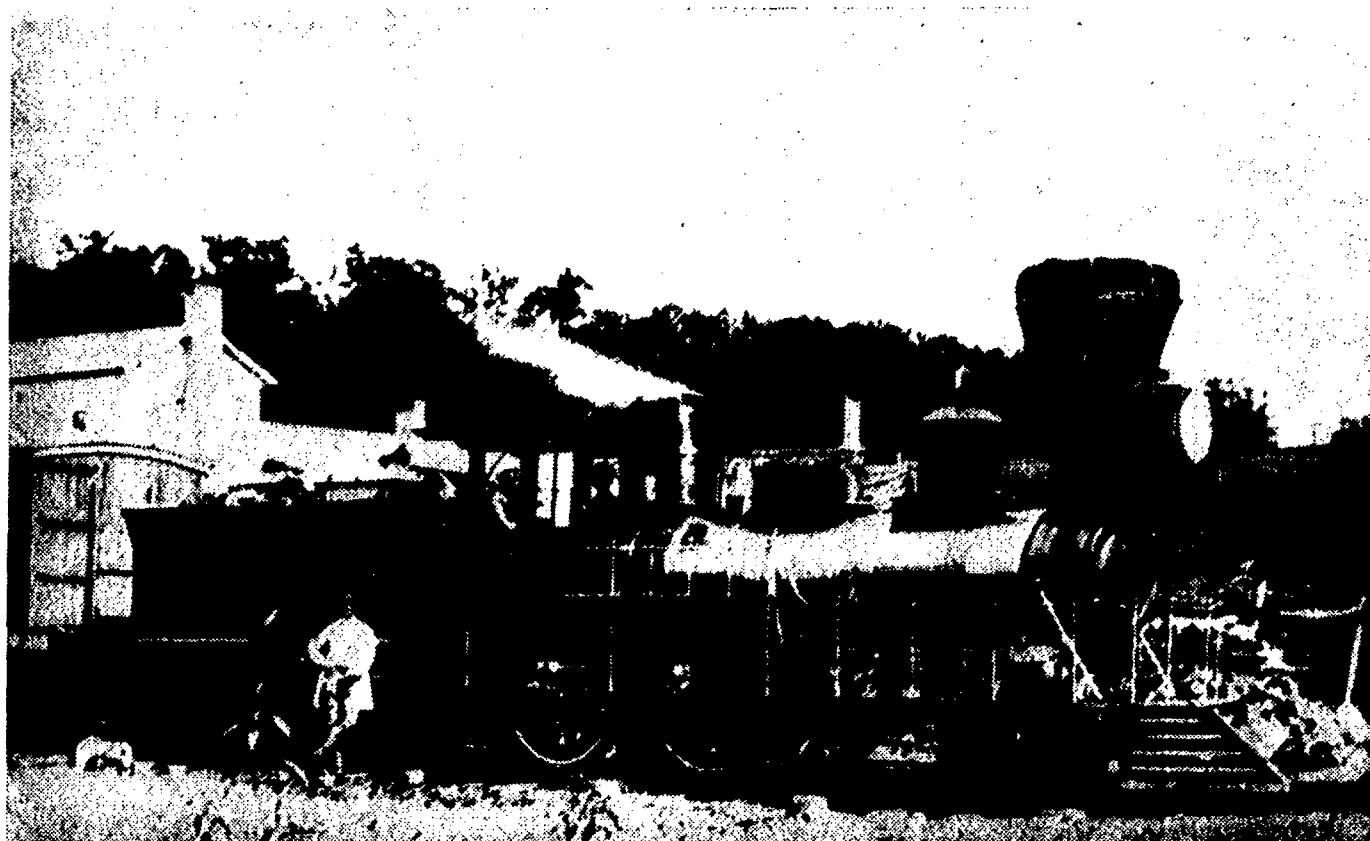
The foregoing brief account brings us to the later development that bears a direct relation to Narrows. The directors of the road became interested in extending a line into the rich coal deposits in West Virginia. Two other routes were considered; one through Glade Springs and Saltville, and the other by way of Bristol. They finally chose the New River route as the most practical, and because it was near to Norfolk, which they hoped someday would become "a successful competitor to Baltimore, Philadelphia and South Amboy in the shipment of bituminous coal."

The new branch, incorporated as the New River Railroad, but wholly owned by the Norfolk and Western, was started from the south end of the New River bridge at Radford (not from Walton where it now diverges) in August, 1881. Rails reached Narrows sometime in the late summer of 1882. By December, 1882 they were "fully ballasted and ready for operation" to the vicinity of Glen Lyn. The railroad was opened to the Flat Top coalfields on May 21, 1883. A great deal of the grading was done by convict labor.

The event of this great enterprise put Giles County on the map and has in a large measure, been responsible for its growth to the present time.

### *Standard Lime and Cement Company*

Standard Lime and Cement Company was started in 1888 at Buckeystown, Maryland, by three brothers, Daniel, Joseph D. and William G. Barker to supply lime for a nearby tannery. The first lime the Company produced was burned in what were known as pot kilns. From 1888 to 1954 the Company was owned and managed by the Barker family, and through hard work and good management it grew and expanded until its present operations consists of nine plants, located in West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois and



OLD N & W LOCOMOTIVE  
In 1858 the railroad was completed into Dublin.

Michigan, employing approximately 1600 employees. Its home office is located in Baltimore, Maryland.

By 1905 the Company was producing lime for tanneries building trades, paper mills and bleaching manufacturers. Fluxing stone for use in the production of steel, commercial stone and railroad ballast were also being produced. In 1921 the Company started burning dolomitic limestone into basic refractory at Millville, West Virginia. Granular basic refractory is now being manufactured by plants of the Company located at Woodville, Ohio; McCook, Illinois; and Manistee, Michigan, as well as at Millville.

The Company started to manufacture Portland Cement at Martinsburg, West Virginia in 1927. The production of cement was increased by the installation of a new 450 Ft. x 12 Ft. rotary kiln and auxiliary equipment early in 1956.

In 1944 the Standard Lime and Stone Company began the erection of a modern lime plant at Kimballton, Virginia. This plant today employs approximately 128 employees and manufactures chemical quality high calcium lime which is used in the chemical, paper and steel industries and for water purification purposes. Mr. G. C. Larkin, the present Plant Superintendent, worked for the Company a number of years before becoming Superintendent on November 1, 1953.

The Company is proud of its safety record which can be attributed to a well organized safety program that was started at its Martinsburg plant on September 28, 1927, and is now in operation at all of the Company's plants.

American-Marietta Company of Chicago, Illinois, purchased the controlling interest of The Standard Lime and Stone Company in November 1954 and on April 18, 1955, the name of the Company was changed to Standard Lime and Cement Company.

The present officers of Standard Lime and Cement Company are:

Robert E. Pflaumer - President; Lewis Rumford II - Executive Vice President; W. D. Garvin - Vice President - Operations; and W. L. Specht - Vice President - Secretary.

#### HISTORY OF LEAS & MC VITTY, INC.

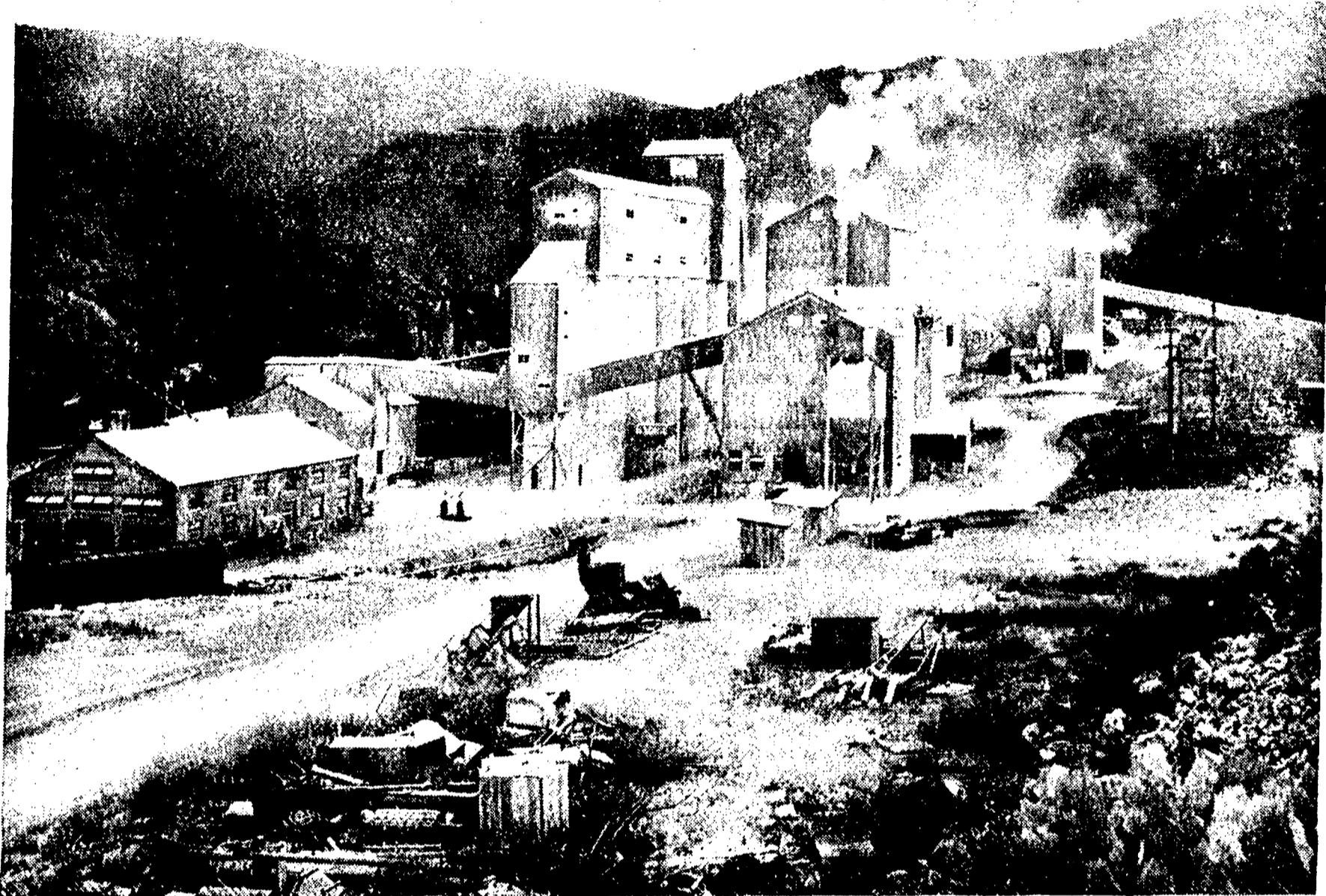
Located on the banks of New River at Bluff City, Virginia stands one of the oldest industries in Southwestern Virginia, Leas & McVitty, Inc. (New River Tannery) manufacturers of heavy sole leather.

This plant was built approximately 62 years ago and was located where it is due to the abundant supply of bark, water and labor. At that time, tanning was done with Chestnut Oak Bark and an abundant supply of this material grew within a radius of 25 miles of the plant. The water supply was excellent and even at that time quite a bit of water was used each day. The labor situation was also a very important reason for settling at this particular point. At that time - This was the only manufacturing concern in the whole county. Labor was plentiful - composed of mostly Farm type men - and then only strong, healthy men could do the type work we had.

The history of Leas & McVitty, Inc., is one of the most outstanding of the entire Tanning Industry of America - not alone for the constant high quality of its product, but quite as much as to the fact that relatively few organizations can point to a Century and a half of business life.

It was in 1812 when the United States had seen but its Fourth President - Mr. James Madison - that Thomas McVitty started a tannery in the little town of Shirleysburg, Pennsylvania. The hides and materials used by that first tannery were secured from the immediate neighborhood as many years were to pass before trains, automobiles and ocean liners would be bringing twentieth-century hides and materials from all quarters of the globe. Nevertheless the leather out of that small tannery at Shirleysburg made a name for itself in the Market places and in due course a second tannery was established in Pennsylvania this time at Saltillo to take care of the growing business.

The original Thomas McVitty had a son, Samuel, and between them the Company carried on from 1812 to 1855, when Mr. William P. Leas was taken in as a partner. The years



NATIONAL GYPSUM PLANT AT KIMBALLTON

passed and a new generation came along, namely Thomas E. McVitty and David Porter Leas, both of whom were active successors to active fathers. It was during this period the Pennsylvania Tanneries were sold and new ones established in the State of Virginia because in the latter state were to be found large areas of Chestnut Oak and Hemlock trees, the bark from which gave the tannin that is combined with the hides to make the finished product.

Three tanneries were established, New River Tannery at Bluff City, Virginia in 1895, Salem Tannery, Salem, Virginia in 1889 and one in Buena Vista, Virginia in 1898. In 1900 a chestnut wood extract plant was erected at Buena Vista, Virginia and known as Buena Vista Extract Company. The purpose of this plant was to assure the three tanneries a steady supply of Best Quality Extract, made under the same Supervision and Management as the leather itself.

Today, in addition to the four Virginia Plants, there is a main warehouse and office at 305 Vine Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania built in 1901 as well as a Finishing Plant acquired in 1910. The Company also operates a Sales Office in Boston, which is the Shoe and Leather Center of the Country.

*The Company takes justifiable pride in pointing out that not a single plant mentioned above has ever closed its doors, even in the most distressed periods of Depression.*

Compared to the early days when hides and tanning materials were available within a short distance of the tanneries, the Company today buys hides from leading centers in the

Western part of the United States. From South America also and China comes Myrabolams - Valonia from Asia Minor, Greece, Borneo, Phillipine Islands, British and Portugese East Africa. In short, the markets of the Entire World are used today to make the best product possible.

Today, this Company and its employees enjoy a feeling of mutual satisfaction and cooperation. Carefully studied schedules embracing Health, Education, Home Owning, Insurance, Pensions, etc., are concrete evidence to each individual that the Management is exercising constant regard for their welfare. Truly, it can be said the history and Growth of this essentially American Organization is a history of the Industrial growth of the United States itself.

#### INTERESTING FACTS IN CONNECTION WITH 1812

Or The Year Leas & McVitty Was Founded  
1812 was during the period of the 4th president of the United States - Mr. James Madison.

The United States was at war with England.

Population of the United States was only 8,000,000.

Louisiana was the 18th. State admitted to the Union.

Men, particularly statesmen wore wigs.

Sailing vessels required 6 weeks to cross Ocean.

Mail Stages left New York for Boston and took 38 hours.

1812 was before the *Star Spangled Banner* was written.

Abraham Lincoln was only three years old.

L & M was 35 years old when the United States Government issued the first postage stamps.

## ***National Gypsum Company***

While this important company began operations in Giles only in a comparatively recent year (1947), its history dates back to 1925, when the company commenced manufacture of Gypsum Wallboard at its first plant at Clarence Center New York. Melvin H. Baker (now chairman of the Board of Directors) was one of the company's original founders. From its beginning with the Clarence Center plant, the company has continued to grow and at the present date has a total of 36 plants, located in different areas of the country from the east to the west coast.

The Company has become an important unit in the building materials industry in the United States. It manufactures products constituting a diversified line of related building materials, including gypsum wallboard, lath and sheeting, gypsum stuccos and base, finish, white, molding, and dental plasters, sound control products; corrugated siding and shingles; asbestos-cement products; hydrated and ground lime and limestone; metal lath; rock wool products and paint. The Company also manufactures paper, principally for its own use in making gypsum boards. The principal trade name is "Gold Bond".

National Gypsum Company's lime plant at Kimballton began operations in 1947. The plant's principal products are Chemical pebble lime, pulverized limestone, agricultural limestone, chemical hydrated lime, agricultural hydrated lime, masons hydrated lime, and spray hydrated lime. These products are used in steel mills, production of carbide, water purification, mine dusting, and farming. The raw material used in production of these items is mined at the plant site.

Along with the protection, safety and welfare of its employees, the company carries a life, accident and hospitalization policy on each of its employees and their dependents, at no cost to the employee.

Officers of the Company include Mr. L. R. Sanderson, Director and President, W. F. Anderson, Vice-President in charge of Operations; N. H. Baker, Chairman of the Board of Directors.

The local plant provides employment for about 170 people and is managed by Mr. Monroe Rule, well-known and respected citizen of Giles County.

## ***Appalachian Electric Power Co. . . .***

THE APPALACHIAN ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY first came into Giles County in the year 1916, purchasing lands in the Glen Lyn area for the Glen Lyn Steam Plant. This plant was being built to supplement hydro-electric power supplied from its two plants on the upper water shed of New River, namely, Bylesby and Buck.

Plant construction was started immediately after acquiring the land and the plant was put in operation July 1, 1919 with one 15,000 KW steam turbo-generator and four boilers.

In the latter part of 1920, the second, a 20,000 KW, turbo generator was put in service with additional boilers. In 1923, the third, also a 20,000 KW unit, was installed; and in 1927, the fourth, a 25,000 KW unit was installed with additional boilers. In 1931 a pulverized fuel boiler was installed, making a total of 13 boilers for the plant with four turbo-generator units, having a total nameplate rating of 80,000 KWs.

In 1942 construction was started on a modern high pressure, high temperature unit with a nameplate rating of 100,000 KW and two boilers. This was completed in June of 1944 on the war emergency, bring a total nameplate rating of 180,000 KW.

The average coal consumption is approximately 35 carloads per 24 hour day. Appalachian power was first fed into



APPALACHIAN GLEN LYN PLANT — 1919

Giles County in 1919, being supplied through the Giles Power Company which operated under a franchise in Narrows and Pearisburg. The Giles Power Company was later purchased by Appalachian in 1926 which now supplies the entire Giles County area with electric power. In 1950 an additional future plant site was purchased about three miles above Narrows on New River.

Construction of a \$26,400,000 addition to the Glen Lyn plant in the form of a new 225,000-kilowatt unit began last year, and when completed will more than double the present capacity for a total of 395,000 kilowatts. Completion is expected early in 1957.

## ***Virginian Limestone Corporation***

The year 1916 may be remembered by some as the year in which Gregory Rasputin, confessor to Czarina, was killed in Leningrad; or as the year in which a munitions explosion (credited to German Saboteurs) occurred in Jersey City, killing 2 and causing \$40,000,000 damage; or for the birth of Judy Canova, Onva de Havilland, Jackie Gleason and Betty Grable; but 1916's big news for Giles County was the organization of the Virginian Limestone Corporation.

Diversification has been the keynote in the progress of this company. Formed originally with the primary purpose of supplying ballast for the Virginian Railway, the company today is one of the largest and most modernly equipped manufacturers of crushed dolomite for railroad ballast, roofing stone, all kinds of concrete and bituminous work, filter stone, agricultural limestone, mortar sand, block sand, and plaster sand. The production of railroad ballast today constitutes a minor portion of the firm's business.

The stone is a Beekmantown Dolomite, and its superior qualities have been authenticated by State, Federal, and private engineering laboratory research. The company operates its own modern laboratory for controlling quality of its products as to cleanliness, sizing and graduation. Its manufactured stone sand excels natural sand in all strength freezing

and thawing tests. Its Dolomite, with its excellent magnesium content, is in constant demand for metallurgical and chemical purpose. The company's aggregates have found wide use. (In the building of Celanese Corporation of America's Celco plant, Giles' largest industry, huge amounts of Virginian Limestone's aggregates were used.)

Normal production of the corporation is about 2,000 tons per day. However, facilities are maintained to gear production to increased demand when necessary, boosting daily production to as high as 4,000 tons (70 railroad cars) per day.

Originally organized and founded by Mr. C. A. Klotz (for whom the community of Klotz is named), the corporation is today headed by Mr. D. L. Williams. It is a matter of great pride to the company that the vast majority of its managerial and supervisory staff has been with the company for over thirty years.

The average number of employees of this company is about fifty.

### ***Celco Plant***

In 1939 when Giles County as well as the rest of the country was slowly pulling out of the worst depression in its history, a glimmer of hope came to the people. The Celanese Corporation of America was considering Giles County as a site for its new plant. In addition to adequate water, labor supply, transportation, excellent climate and natural resources a number of public spirited citizens subscribed funds for the purchase of a 1232 acre plant site on the Raleigh Johnson farm on the north side of New River between Narrows and Pearisburg.

The Celco Plant was started without ceremony in April, 1939, when three companies began construction work that was to turn an apple orchard into one of the largest acetate staple filament plants in the world. The Sutton Construction Company began to install the railroad siding, the Luck Construction Company had the underground services, and the Hughes-Foulkrod Company of Philadelphia started on

the buildings. A new industrial, social and economic age had been born in Giles County. By the end of December the plant, as planned up to that time, was almost complete, a record breaking construction job.

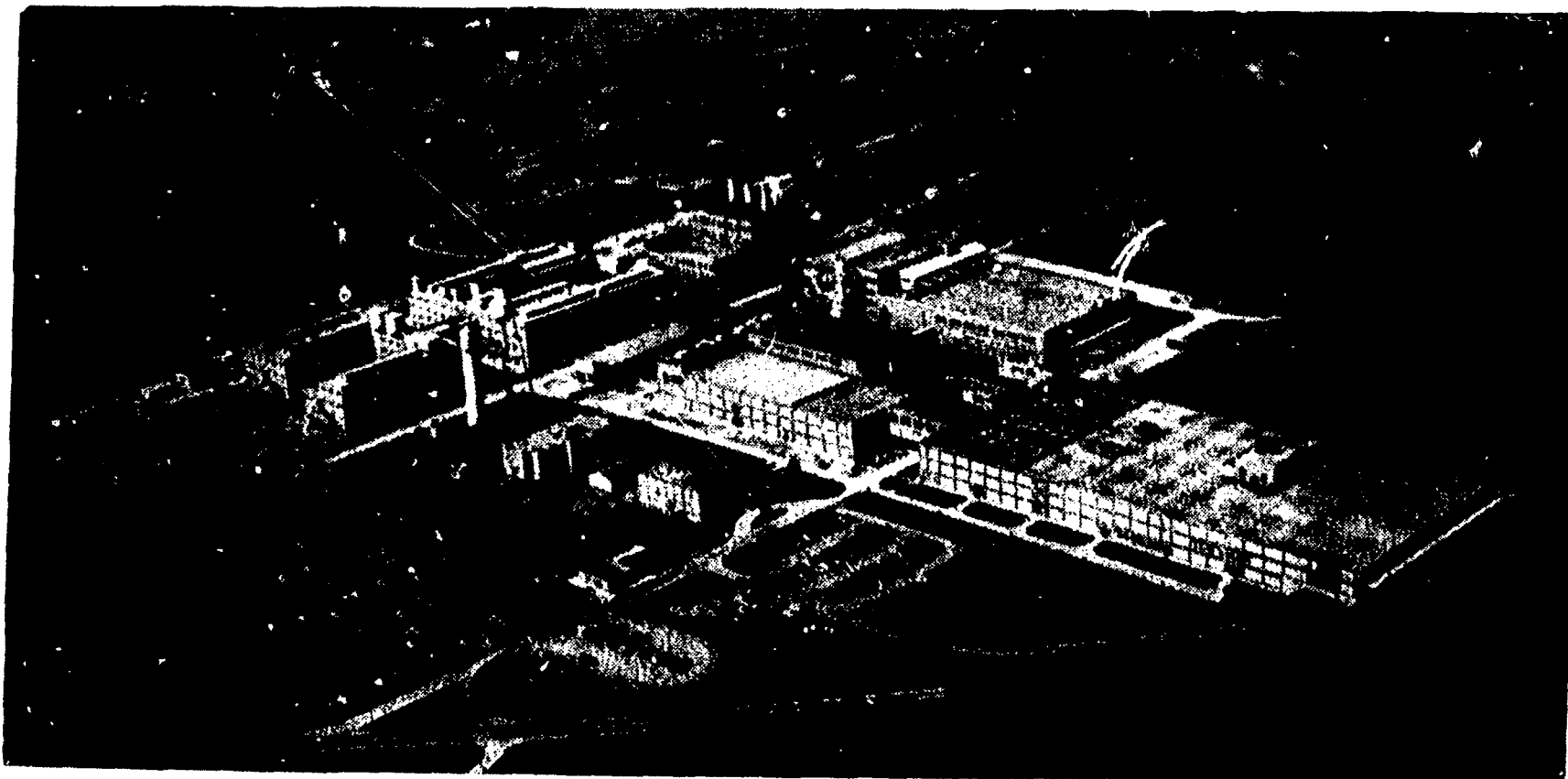
Peter D. Cooper was the first plant manager, S. B. Roberts was the engineer in charge of construction. Many staff employees were transferred from the Amcelle Plant at Cumberland Maryland. A good number of these men are still with Celco. They have made substantial citizens and together with their families have made a valuable contribution to the life of the community.

The first local staff man to be hired was J. Frank Heslep, Jr., who is now manager of Wolf Creek Motor Company. The first telephone operator was Jimmy Johnson. The first chauffeur was C. T. (Pete) Stafford of Pearisburg. In the first months there was no cafeteria and workers brought their own lunches or went home in the sixty minute lunch period. There was a concession stand run by "Pop" Harris, where cokes, sandwiches and cigarettes were sold. The first hourly paid employee was Fred Runions, who was hired foreman in the power plant.

By the end of December, 1939, Celco had 400 men and one woman employed. The one lone woman was Miss Ann Deck of Staffordsville, who was by that time the telephone operator. Other female employees followed soon after, among them Miss Mary Lee Craft, R. N., and Miss Fannie Wright. They started to work January 8, 1940, the same day as Dr. George Williams.

The first run of "dope" through the spinning machines was on Christmas Day, 1939. Early in January commercial production of filament was an accomplished fact; the Celco plant was in operation.

The first personnel report was made February 3, 1940 and there were 103 staff members and 766 hourly paid employees. The number of employees increased steadily until the peak was reached in 1948, when there were about 600 staff and 4000 hourly employed personnel, many of whom were construction workers.



AERIAL VIEW, CELCO PLANT, CELANESE CORPORATION OF AMERICA

**150th Anniversary  
Celebration Committees**

**OVERALL COMMITTEE:**

J. L. Dillow, Chairman, Narrows  
W. C. Caudill, M. D., Pearisburg  
Hayne Dominick, Narrows  
R. E. Wheeler, Narrows  
Rufus H. Shumate, Pearisburg  
Sam Robinson, Pembroke  
C. S. Hoge, Hoges' Chapel  
E. D. Coburn, Narrows  
T. E. Starnes, Thessalia  
E. K. Goldthwaite, Narrows  
P. L. Comer, Rich Creek  
L. O. Fox, Pearisburg  
Robert H. Woods, Sr., Pearisburg  
W. P. Copenhaver, Pearisburg  
T. J. Cyfers, Pearisburg  
E. B. Hedrick, Bane

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

J. L. Dillow, Chairman  
Rufus H. Shumate, Treasurer  
T. J. Cyfers  
E. K. Goldthwaite  
Robert H. Woods, Sr.

**DIRECTOR:**

Raymond E. Hogan, Ripplemead

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR:**

Miss Melrose Higgenbotham, Pembroke

**HISTORICAL AND RESEARCH COM.:**

Sam Robinson, Pembroke  
Mrs. E. E. Woodson, Narrows  
Mrs. K. S. French, Narrows  
Mr. J. R. Shanklin, Glen Lyn  
Mr. Robert Friend, Narrows  
Mr. Leo Goeller, Ripplemead  
Miss Mattie Guthrie, Ripplemead  
Mr. Joseph Bishop, Eggleston  
Mr. Frank Kelly Stafford, Eggleston  
Mr. C. A. Deck, Staffordsville  
Mrs. John T. S. Hoge, Hoges Chapel  
Miss Melrose Higgenbotham, Pembroke  
Mrs. W. B. Snidow, Pearisburg  
Mrs. T. F. Witten, Pearisburg  
Mrs. C. A. Hoilman, Pearisburg

Mr. Mason Miller, Newport  
Mr. J. D. Miller, Newport  
Mrs. Shannon Miller, White Gate  
Mrs. Andrew Francis, White Gate  
Mr. Carroll Barger, Eggleston  
Mr. Julius Johnston, Staffordsville  
Mr. Walter Brown, Staffordsville  
Mrs. P. O. Ivery, Narrows  
Miss Nancy E. Pearson, Pearisburg

**OTHER EVENTS**

Pearisburg and Narrows Klwanis Clubs

**PARADE COMMITTEE**

J. J. Kerrigan, Chairman, Pearisburg  
Roy Witten, Pearisburg  
Bob LeGard, Narrows  
Ed Knight, Rich Creek  
Charles Morrison, Pembroke  
Duval Williams, Eggleston  
Frank Farrier, Newport  
Ed Hedrick, Staffordsville

**GRAND BALL**

Mrs. T. F. Massie, Chairman, Rich Creek  
Miss Mary Davis Adair, Narrows  
Mrs. R. L. Frederickson, Narrows  
Mrs. Earl Hillsman, Pearisburg  
Mrs. Harry Austin, Pearisburg  
Mrs. Bernard Mason, Pearisburg  
Mr. Gordon Ruble, Pearisburg  
Mr. Frank Winston, Pearisburg  
Dr. D. F. Love, Pearisburg  
Mrs. Ida Payne Anderson, Newport  
Mrs. Clarence Archer, Glen Lyn  
Mrs. Julius Johnston, Staffordsville  
Mrs. Frank Heslep, Sr., Narrows  
Mrs. B. K. Garman, Pembroke  
Mrs. Charles Morrison, Pembroke  
Mrs. Hattie E. Miller, Newport  
Mr. Clinton Buckland, Eggleston  
Miss Virginia Whittaker, Eggleston

**MUSIC COMMITTEE**

Mrs. Ralph Ott, Chairman, Narrows  
Mr. Everett Dayton, Narrows  
Mrs. J. L. Dillow, Narrows  
Mrs. Harold Hale, Narrows  
Mr. Ronald Shomo, Pearisburg  
Miss Ruth Kirby, Pearisburg  
Mrs. Franklin Coburn, Jr., Rich Creek

Mrs. Bess Hodge, Pembroke  
Mrs. William Ross, Narrows

**CONCESSIONS**

E. D. Coburn, Chairman, Narrows

**CELEBRITIES**

J. L. Dillow, Chairman, Narrows  
W. C. Caudill, M. D., Pearisburg  
Frank Painter, Chairman, Pearisburg  
Mrs. Harold Mathena, Pearisburg  
Mrs. L. M. Auer, Rich Creek

**BEAUTY PAGEANT COMMITTEE**

Mrs. P. M. Johnston, Pembroke  
Mrs. Luther Lucas, Newport  
Mrs. Gean Atkins, Eggleston

**GILES COUNTY AIR FORCE COM.:**

E. G. Skidmore, Chairman, Narrows  
Robert L. Powell, Pearisburg  
Miss Frances Lovell, Narrows

**SHAVING LICENSES & BEARD  
CONTEST COMMITTEE**

Robert H. Woods, Sr., Chmn., Pearisburg  
Clayton Davis, Pearisburg  
Members of the Voluntary Fire Depart-  
ments of Giles County

**STREET DANCE COMMITTEE**

John Holland, Chairman, Narrows  
W. O. Gentry, Rich Creek  
T. L. Watters, Rich Creek  
Al Blevins, Narrows  
Walter McMahan, Pembroke

**TOWN AND COMMUNITY DAY COM.:**

T. E. Starnes, Chairman, Thessalia  
W. C. Storer, Sr., Narrows  
T. C. Boggess, Rich Creek  
Newton Walters, Pembroke  
Doak Lucas, Newport  
William Bane, White Gate  
Mrs. Pete Stafford, Trigg  
Mrs. Woodrow Robertson, Thessalia  
Mr. C. C. Eaton, Staffordsville  
Mrs. James Miller, White Gate  
Mr. Clinton Buckland, Eggleston  
Mrs. J. R. Johnston, Trigg

**HOUSING COMMITTEE**

T. J. Cyfers, Chairman, Pearisburg

**Program of The Giles County Sesquicentennial**

<b>SUNDAY, AUGUST 26, 1956 "DEDICATION DAY"</b>		5:00 P. M.	Courthouse Lobby and Porch.
8:00 A. M.	County-Wide Religious Service - Courthouse Lawn, Pearisburg.	2:00 P. M.	Band Concert, Giles County Band - Courthouse Lawn.
11:00 A. M.	Religious Services and Homecoming in all of the Churches of the County.	3:00 P. M.	Garden Party and Tea, sponsored by DAR - Mrs. Bernard Mason's Home, Pearisburg.
2:30 P. M.	Open House with refreshments - Giles County Life Saving and Rescue Squad's new building, Pearisburg.	8:00 P. M.	Finals - Giles County Beauty Pageant - Pageant Grounds, next to Hospital.
4:00 P. M.	Musical Program - Details announced later - Pageant Grounds, next to Hospital, Pearisburg.	<b>TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 1956 "WALKER'S CREEK DAY"</b>	
10:00 A. M. to 4:00 P. M.	Registration of all visitors - Courthouse Lobby and Porch.	All Day	Historic Displays and Exhibits throughout the County
<b>MONDAY, AUGUST 27, 1956 "QUEEN'S DAY"</b>		10:00 A. M. to 5:00 P. M.	Registration of all visitors- Courthouse Lobby and Porch.
All Day:	Historic Displays and Exhibits throughout the County.	2:30 P. M.	Band Concert - Giles County Band - Eggleston High School, Eggleston.
10:00 A. M. to	Registration of all visitors -	3:00 P. M.	Walker's Creek District Activities - Historical Skit, depicting the school room of the White Gate

6:00 P. M.	Academy in 1870 - Eggleston High School.				
8:00 P. M.	Queen's Dinner - Place to be announced later.				
	First Performance of "THE CALL OF THE RIVER", Historical Pageant - Pageant Grounds.	8:00 P. M.			Centennial of Giles County in 1906 and Refreshments - Pembroke High School.
					Third Performance of "THE CALL OF THE RIVER", Historical Pageant - Pageant Grounds.
	WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 1956				FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 1956 "CELEBRITIES DAY"
	"NARROWS DISTRICT DAY"				
All Day	Historic Displays and Exhibits throughout the County.	All Day:			Historic Displays and Exhibits throughout the County.
10:00 A. M. to	Registration of all Visitors -	10:00 A. M. to			Registration of all visitors -
5:00 P. M.	Courthouse Lobby and Porch.	5:00 P. M.			Courthouse Lobby and Porch.
9:30 A. M. to	Narrows District Day Activities - Style Show,	1:00 P. M.			Grand Parade - Bands, Floats, Marching Units.
9:00 P. M.	Cake Walk, Slide Film Showing, Wood Chopping and Sawing Contests, Children's Contests, Demonstrations, Old Time Fiddler's Contest, Beard Judging Contest for District, Old Time Song Festival, Tea and Antique Show by DAR and Vesper Services - Narrows Park and Community.				Biggest parade in Giles County's History.
		8:00 P. M.			Fourth and Final Performance of "THE CALL OF THE RIVER", Historical Pageant, Pageant Grounds.
8:00 P. M.	Street Dance - Narrows.				SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1956
8:00 P. M.	Second Performance of "THE CALL OF THE RIVER", Historical Pageant, Pageant Grounds.				"GRAND BALL AND PRINCETON DAY"
	THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 1956	All Day:			Historic Displays and Exhibits throughout the County.
All Day:	Historic Displays and Exhibits throughout the County.	10:00 A. M. to			Registration of all visitors -
10:00 A. M. to	Registration of all visitors -	5:00 P. M.			Courthouse Lobby and Porch.
5:00 P. M.	Courthouse Lobby and Porch.	11:00 A. M.			Finals of Beard Judging Contest for entire County - Courthouse Lawn.
11:00 A. M.	Band Concert - Giles County Band - Courthouse Lawn.	2:00 P. M.			"Golden Horseshoe" Reception - Band Concert, Giles County Band - Organ, Piano Concert - Refreshments - Mt. Lake Hotel Grounds, Mt. Lake. (Sponsored by Residents of Princeton, W. Va.)
2:00 P. M.	Pembroke-Newport Districts Day Activities - Talent Show, Beard Judging Contest for Districts, Recognition of people present who attend the	9:00 P. M.			Grand Ball - Period Costume and Formal Attire - Music by Russ Carlton and his Orchestra - Pearisburg Elementary School.

## Table of Contents

150th Anniversary Committees .....	45	Hale, Herbert W. ....	31	Pearis, George .....	16, 17, 25
150th Anniversary Program .....	45	Hare, Joseph .....	15	Pearisburg .....	19, 24
A. F. and A. M. ....	7	Harmon, Adam .....	13	Pearisburg Academy .....	4
Appalachian Elec. Power Co. ....	43	Hayes, Col. Rutherford B. ....	25	Pearisburg Baptist Church .....	D
Augusta County .....	14, 15	High Street, Pearisburg .....	4	Pearisburg Fire Department .....	B
Banks of Pearisburg .....	3	Hoge's Chapel .....	A	Pearisburg Gazette .....	5
Batt and Fallam .....	13	Hoge Mansion .....	B	Pearisburg, General View .....	2
Burk, Capt. Thomas .....	22	Ingles, Mary .....	14	Pearisburg Methodist Church .....	D
Byrd's Trace .....	14	Intermont .....	32	Pearisburg Presbyterian Church .....	C, 3, 6
Celanese Corporation .....	44	Jefferson, Thomas .....	15	Pearisburg Populations .....	3
Chapman, John .....	15	Johnson, Rev. James .....	32	Pearisburg Post Office .....	1
Charlton's Store .....	4	Johnston, Tom .....		Pearisburg Virginian .....	4,
Christ Episcopal Church .....	C	Leas & McVitty .....	41	Pembroke .....	A
Civil Appointments by Military .....	7	Lybrook, Philip .....	14	Porter, Mary .....	14
Civil War .....	24	Main Street, Pearisburg, 80's .....	D, 2	Railroads .....	20
Coburn's Store .....	12	Masonian Female Institute .....	4	Rich Creek .....	B
County Clerk .....	5	Mountain Lake .....	22	Ripplemead Union Sunday School .....	C
County, Physical Features .....	2	Mountain Lake Ave., Pearisburg .....	4	Rowland, Lynea .....	34
Delegates .....	8	McKensey, Moredock .....	14	Stage Coaches .....	20
Dr. Harvey Johnston's Office .....	3	Narrows .....	26, 27	Standard Lime & Cement Co. ....	41
Early Roads .....	20	Narrows Churches .....	37, 38, 39	Snidow, Jacob .....	15
Early Schools .....	3, 6, 23	Narrows Fire Department .....	34	Snidow, William Bane .....	21
Eaton, David .....	8	Narrows Post Office .....	28	Soldier's Entitlement .....	21
Eggleston's Springs .....	14	Narrows Public Library .....	35	Taverns-1812 .....	3
First County Court .....	16	Narrows Schools .....	29, 30, 31	The Year 1806 .....	15
First Natl. Bank, Narrows .....	37	Narrows Water System .....	33	Toney, John .....	14
First Settlers .....	14, 15	National Gypsum Co. ....	42, 43	Virginian Limestone Co. ....	43
Floods .....	33	Newport .....	A	Virginian Railway .....	39, 40
Formation of Giles County .....	16	New River, Holston & Western Ry. ....	21	Wabash Camp Meeting .....	5
Giles County Courthouse .....	16	New River Navigation Company .....	6	Wenonah Ave., Pearisburg .....	1
Giles County, Early Beginnings .....	13	New River Tannery .....	19	Western Hotel .....	6
Giles Recreation Park .....	35	New River White Sulphur Springs .....	8	Williams, Judge Martin .....	D
Giles, William Branch .....	17, 18	Norfolk and Western Railway .....	40, 41	Wood, Col. Abraham .....	13
Hale, Edward .....	15	Old Dwellings .....	1	World War I Veterans .....	9

PRINTED AND BOUND BY  
THE VIRGINIAN-LEADER PRESS,  
PEARISBURG, VA.  
ENGRAVINGS BY GREER STUDIOS,  
MARION, VA.

