A History of Goshen, Virginia

Talk and slide show given by Anne McClung

Sponsored by

The Rockbridge Historical Society

Sunday, September 10, 2017, at 2:30 PM

at the Goshen Baptist Church

Refreshments and fellowship. Please come! There is no charge.

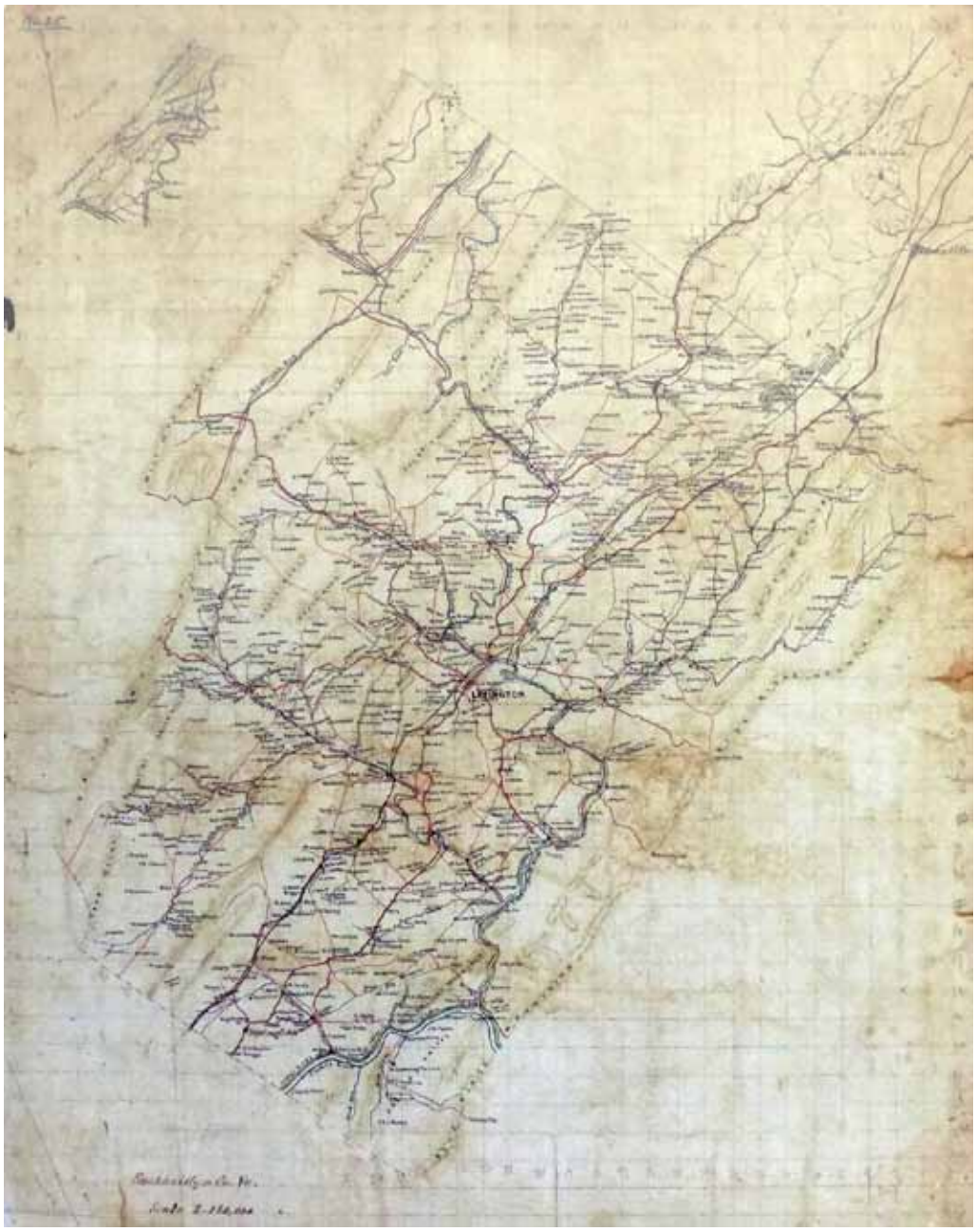
Drone Photo of Goshen. Anne McClung and Laurie Lipscomb.

Welcome to Goshen, where a railroad, a boom town, iron furnaces, fertile ground and resort hotels with healing mineral waters combined to give the town a rich and diverse history.

The town is snuggled and secured by the surrounding mountains of the North Mountain Range to the east and Mill Mountain to the west. We may think we have total control or choice of where to establish our roots, but it could be that the unique arrangements of the mountains to the valley floor are what really determines our settlements and shapes our lives. Goshen is well watered and distinguished by the juncture of Mill Creek and the Big Calfpasture River. These two streams join and flow eastward to join the Little Calfpasture, just at the western end of the Pass, where they form the confluence of the Maury River.

Like most of the county, Goshen is believed to have been rich hunting grounds for Indians but not a place of permanent settlement. That came with the farmers of English, Scottish, and German descent. Alexander Dunlap and his family were the first such settlers in 1744. He built the first log home in the area on the hill above where the train station is now. His son later built a large brick home down on the Calfpasture. Agriculture was the mainstay for many, many years as more settlers arrived to settle on the banks of the Calfpasture and Mill Creek.

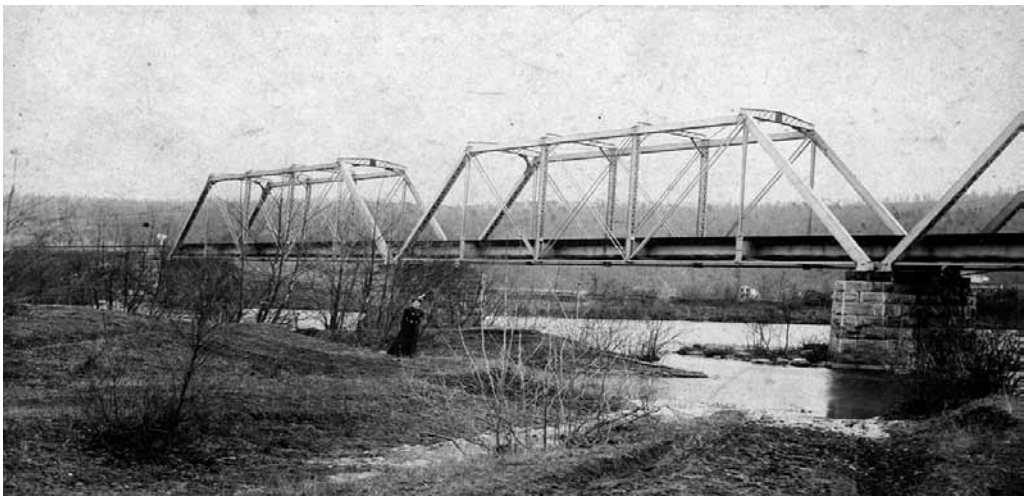
Among the earliest names were Ramsey's, Guinn, Mays, Hamiliton, Buchanan, and Brattons, to name a few.

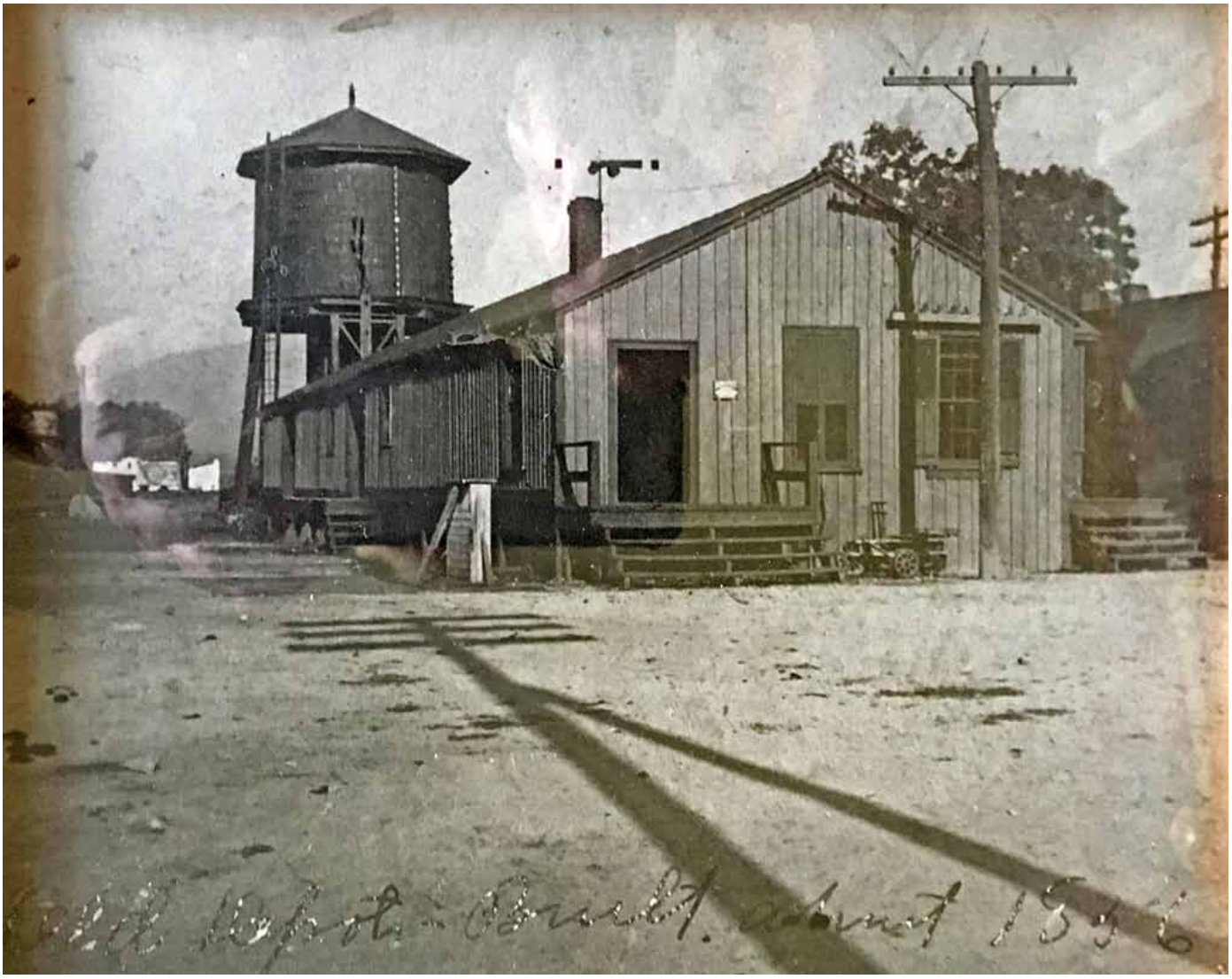


1860s map of Rockbridge County with family names indicating settlement.

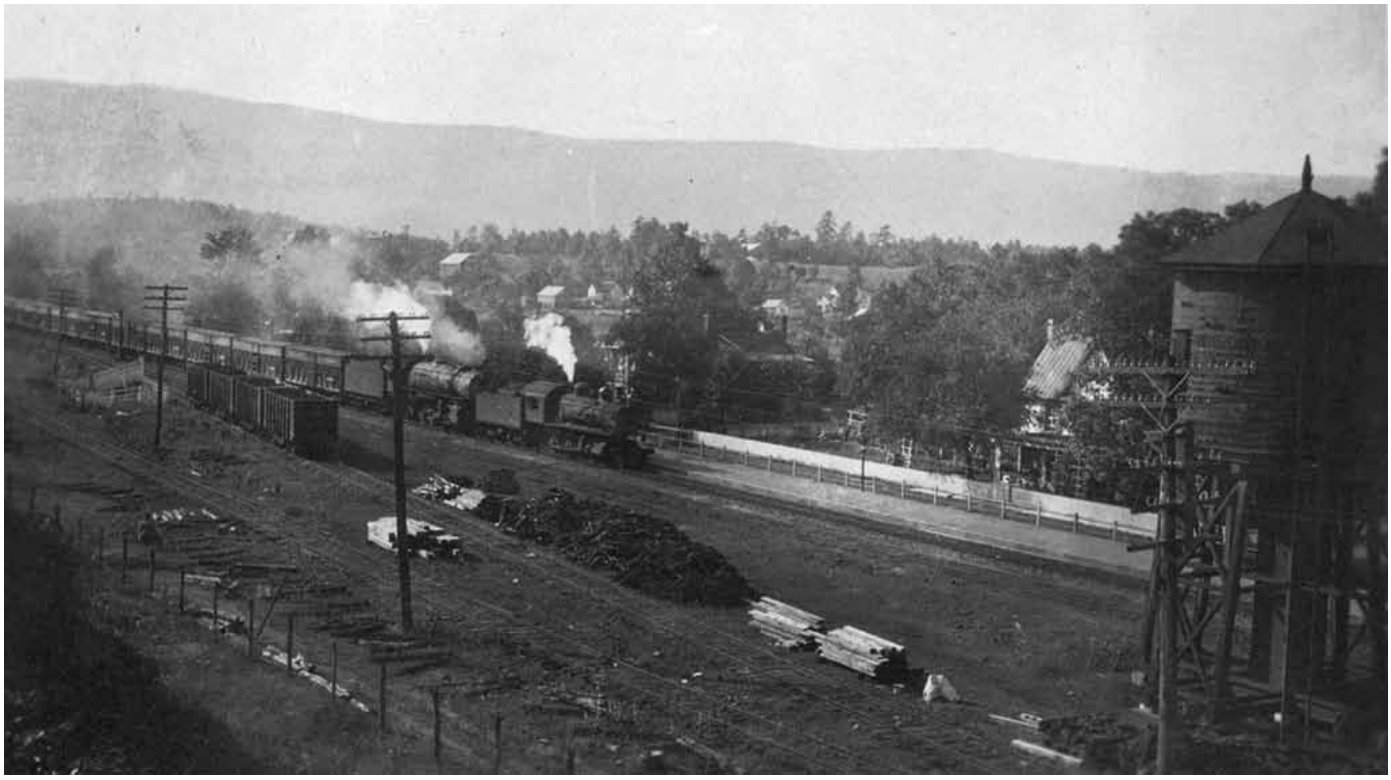
Later came Graham's, Bells, Davises, Ayers, Davidsons, Roadcaps, Jollys, Allens, Paxtons, Wilhelms, Withrows, Ingrams, Alphins, Williams, Lyles, Woods, Walkers, Goodloes, and many more. With these families the area really began to evolve.

At this time, the area had not been honored with a name. But in 1855, the Virginia Central Railroad extended track from Staunton to Clifton Forge. After the track was destroyed during the Civil War, the line was acquired by the C&O and became one of their main routes between D C and Ohio. The C&O named this stop Goshen Depot after the prosperous and fertile farm owned by Joseph Bell whose family lived along the line since 1817, long before the train came through. By 1883, around the time that the iron railroad bridge over the Calfpasure was being built, the agricultural and growing industrial community centered around the Depot became known as Goshen Bridge. When the town was chartered in 1884 the name was shortened to Goshen.





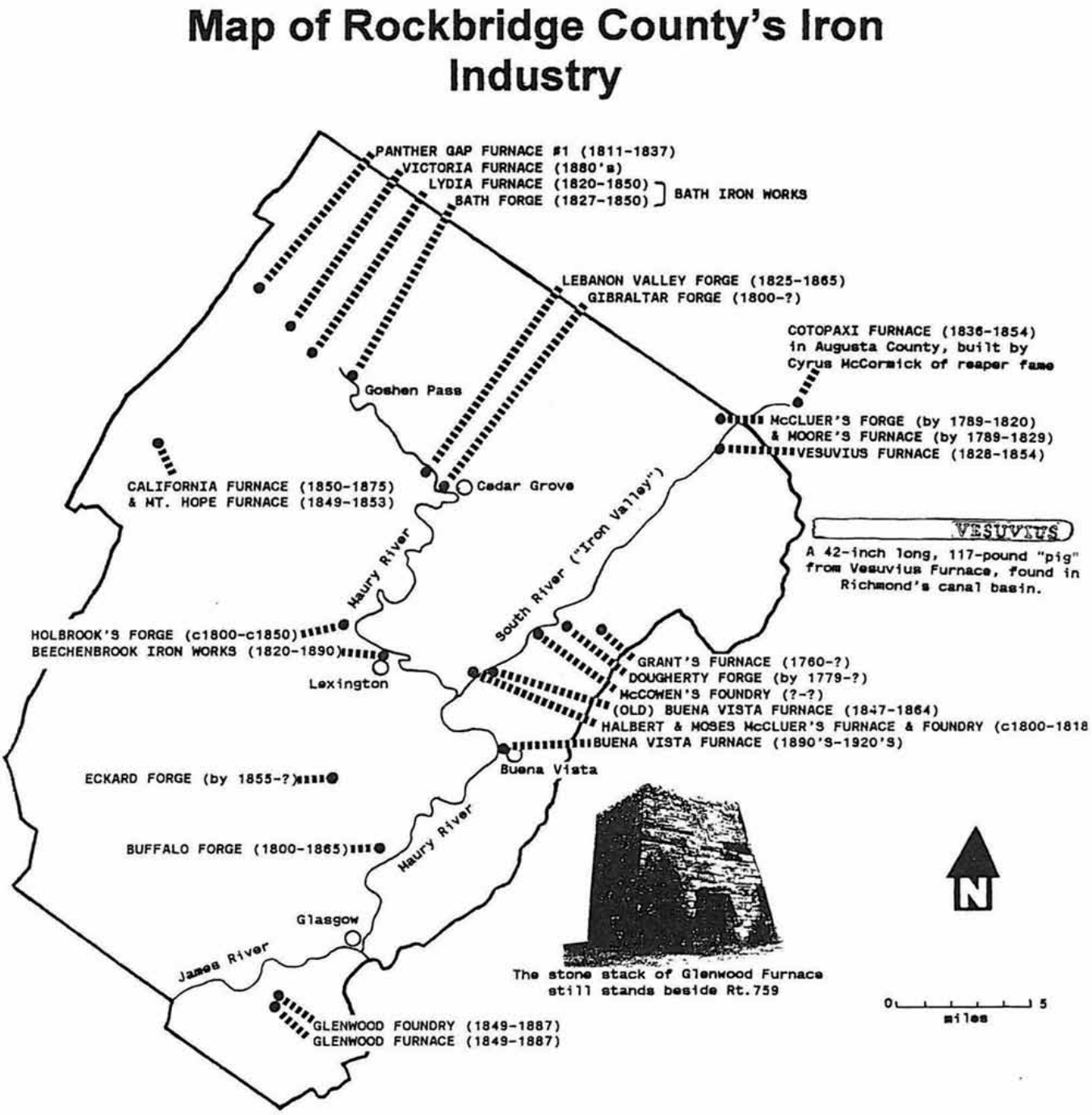
Goshen Depot 1856.



Goshen Depot 1890s.

RAILROAD, SPAS AND FURNACES

Agriculture was the basis for the settling of the Goshen area but eventually what really put Goshen on the map was the railroad, iron ore and the healing springs. And one really cannot be discussed without the others because they are so intertwined in their history. The story is complicated and lengthly and only a brief summary is possible for today.



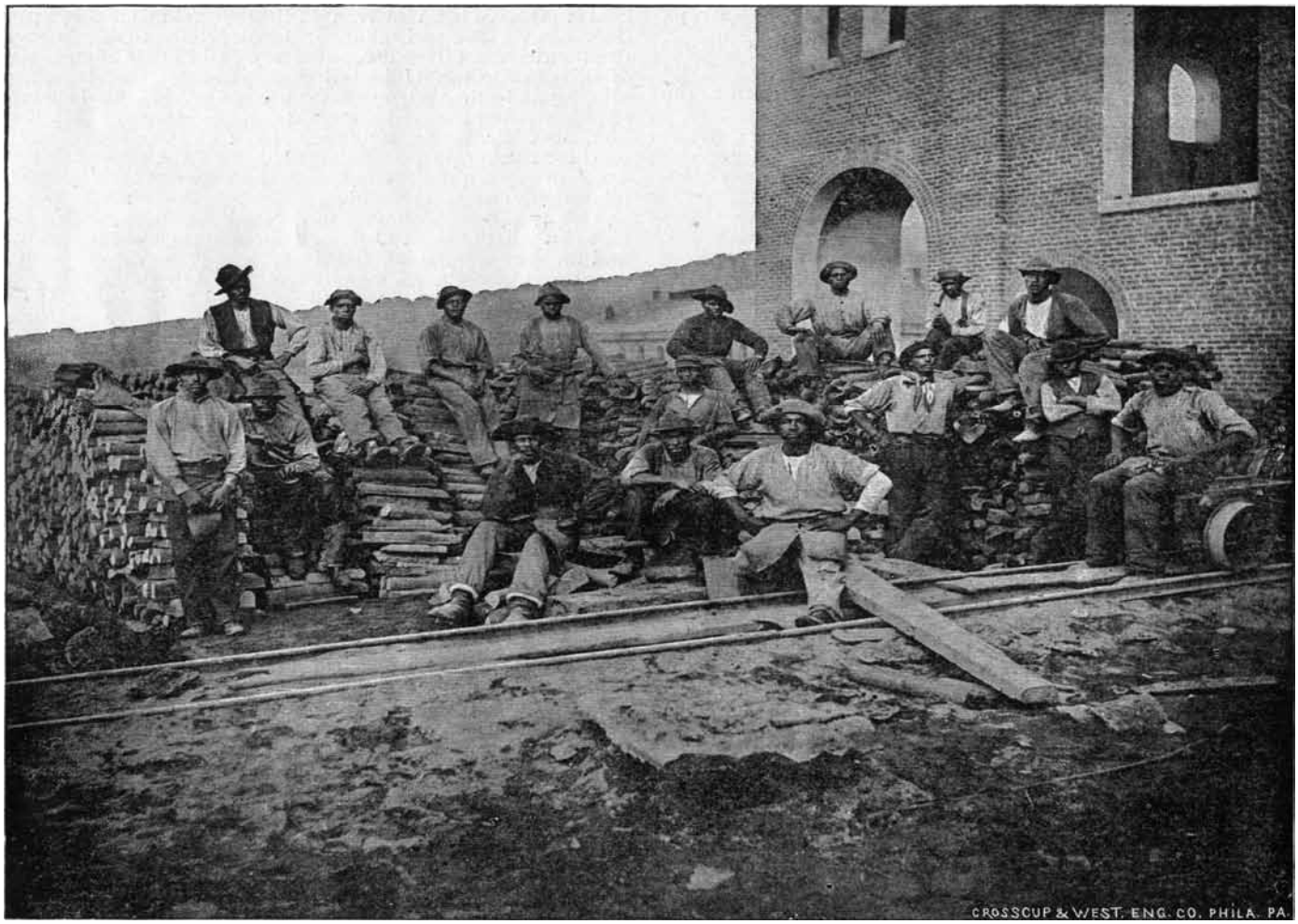
Map of iron furnaces in Rockbridge County. 1800s.

Let's start with one of the first iron works in the area – The Lydia Furnace also known as the Bath Iron Works, was purchased in 1825 by Mr.William Weaver, perhaps one of the most well known men in the iron business. He, at one time or another, owned several furnaces including the Buffalo Forge. The Lydia was located at the western end of the Pass, near where the swinging bridge is now. It was a cold-fired furnace about 35 feet tall and 80 feet in diameter. Without the advantage of having the railroad at the time, supplies and ore were hauled in by wagons and teams of horses or mules. Weaver built a toll road through the Pass to

wagon his pig iron down to Cedar Grove, thus developing a more direct connection between Lexington and Goshen.

Weaver was one of the first iron masters to buy slaves in the 1820s to work in his furnaces. The work of the iron maker was brutal and of a nature unknown today. Slaves furnished the brawn, and to a large extent the brains of his iron works. As Lee Sauder, Lexington's modern day iron master, said,

"All I know is the iron making business in the upper James Basin was large for its time and it was entirely slave-powered. Not just the grunts hauling ore out of the ridges and shoveling the charcoal, but the men tweaking and tuning the blast furnaces and working the trip hammers, the truly skilled iron workers, were slaves."



Slaves at the Victoria Furnace in Goshen.

Mr. John Doyle, Weaver's partner, was also heavily involved in the iron industry and after the pair sold the Bath Iron Works, Doyle went on to later build the Mount Hope Furnace. And Weaver actually repurchased the Lydia/Bath Iron Works in 1849 and operated it until 1852 when it was shuttered. The closing was caused by the difficulty of transporting the ore and its efficiency was lagging.

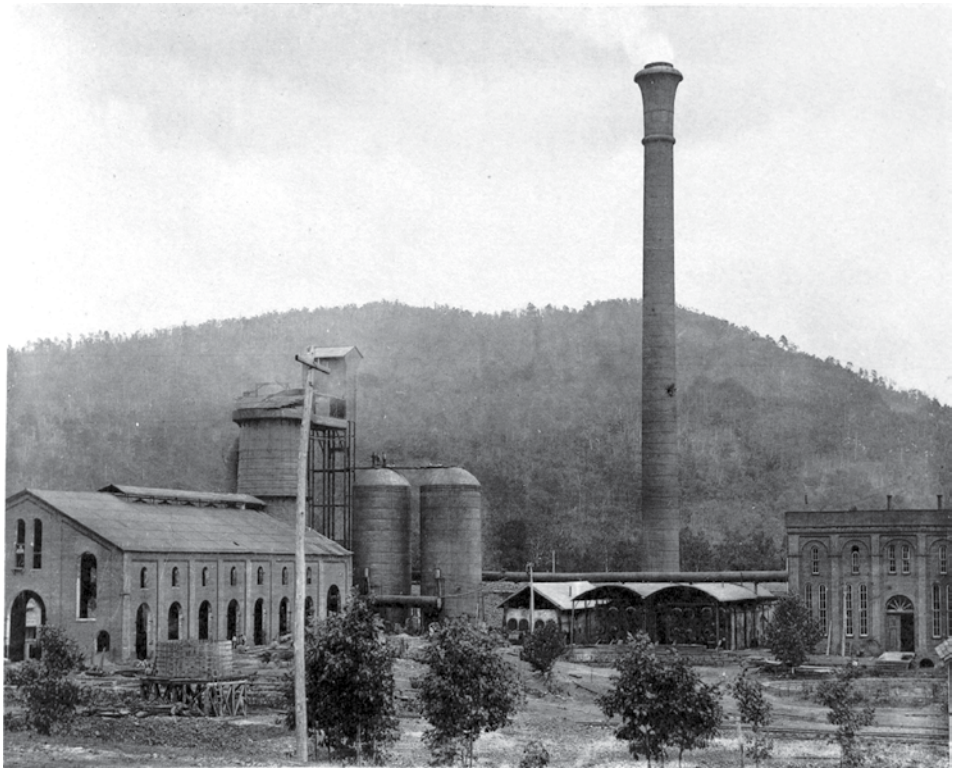
As mentioned, Mr. Doyle built the Mount Hope Furnace in 1849. It was only in operation for about four years as it was overshadowed by the efficiency of the California Furnace which was built in 1850 and owned by John J. Jordan, a familiar family name in our county. Both furnaces were very close together and had the

same access to iron ore, water, and eventually the railroad. They were located on Bratton's Run and were very similar in appearance and both were charcoal-powered furnaces. Bratton Run Mines provided iron ore for the these two Furnaces while they operated.

Cold Blast Buena Vista Furnace at South River.

An oversimplified explanation of the difference between a cold-blast furnace and a hot-blast furnace may be helpful in understanding how these blast furnaces worked. In a cold-blast furnace the air that facilitated the needed intense heat was pumped in from large bellows. They used charcoal for fuel and a blast of air to fan the burning charcoal until it reached the needed temperature of 3,000 degrees to melt the iron ore. In the hot-blast furnaces steam engines were used to heat the air prior to being blasted into the furnace.

After the Mount Hope and the California Furnaces were closed and demolished, The Victoria Furnace was built in 1882. It was owned by a British consortium, who named the Furnace for Queen Victoria and it was constructed under the management of a local person Mr. William N. Page. It was located along Rt. 39 as you come into Goshen from either Bratton's Run or Goshen Pass. The Victoria Furnace, sometimes referred to as the Goshen Furnace, was a hot-fired blast furnace and in its first year the furnace produced about 25 thousand tons of pig iron.

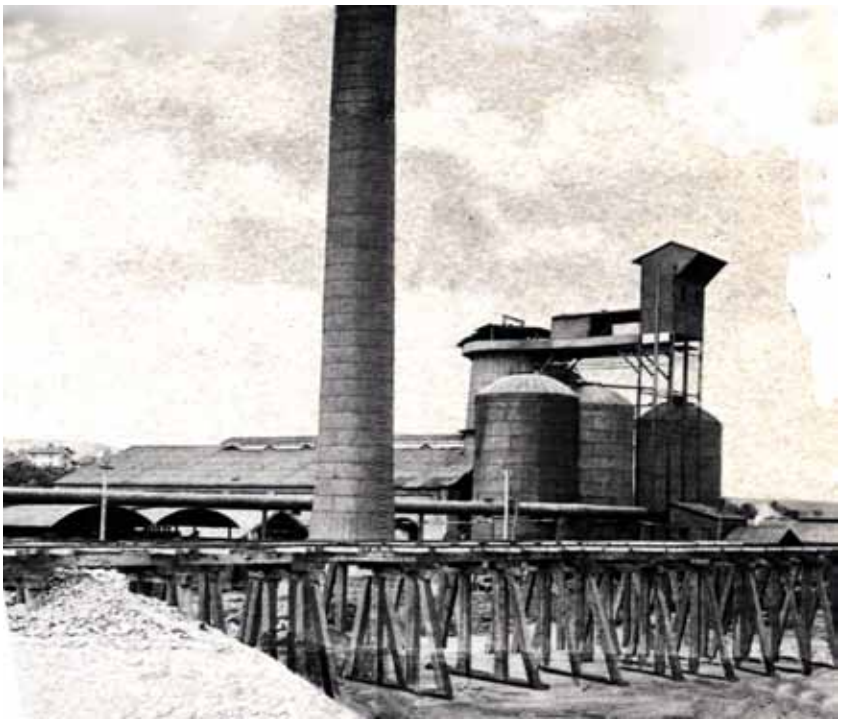


Victoria Furnace. Hot blast furnace in Goshen.

Locher Silica, a sand plant, seen

in the foregournd of the picture below, shipped, by rail, the sand to West Va. where it was used to make glass windows for cars. And the Victoria Funance employed as many as 500 men at one time. As many as a hundred small buildings which housed most of the workers, lined the long hill that overlooked the furnace.

As I mentioned earlier ore was obtained from the Bratton Run Ore Mines. The railroad brought the ore to the furnace as well as shipped the pig iron out. Limestone, which was used as a fluxing agent which caused the iron to separate from the impurities in the ore, was brought in from the Bells Valley Quarry by rail, too.



According to J. T. Allen, author of LOST LANDMARKS OF GOSHEN, ". . . When one passes by the old furnace grounds today, it is hard to realize that where lies only rubble and cinders once was the finest furnace in the state, if not the finest in the entire south. Allen further says a friend, H. L. Bell related to him that, " . . . when the furnace was in operation, he

Narrow guage train that carried ore to the Victoria Furnace.

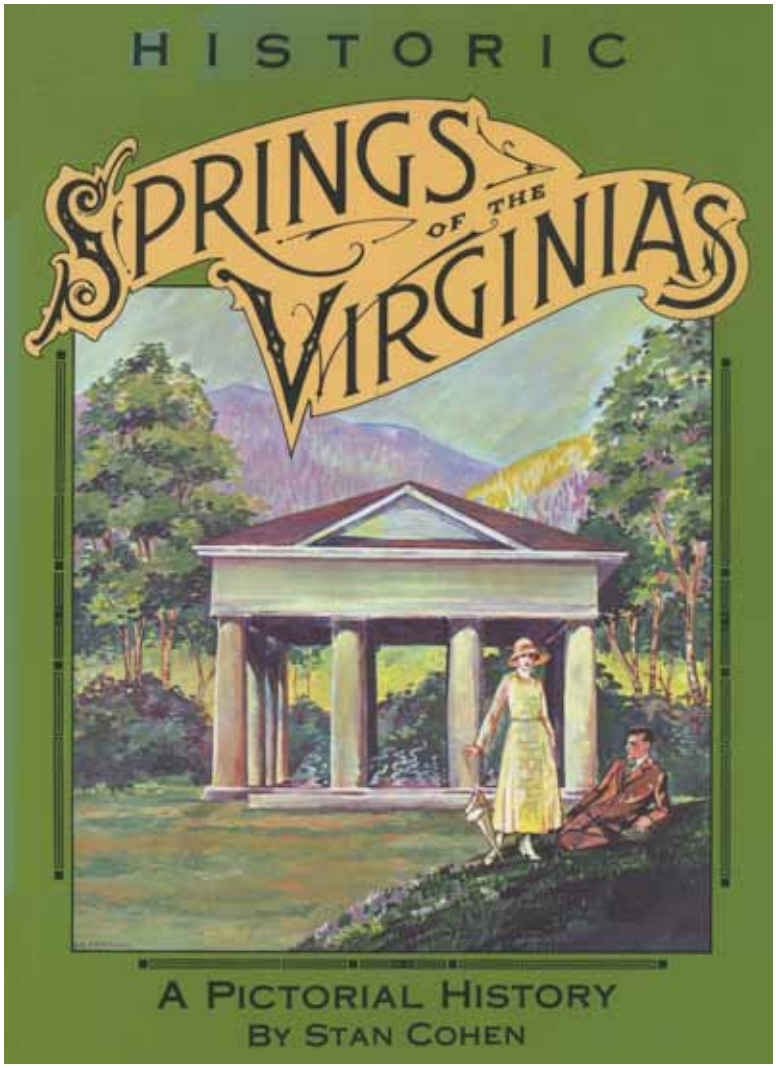
could sit on his front porch at night and see plainly enough to be able to read a newspaper by the light given from the cinders."

The Victoria Furnace closed for good at the close of world war one.

Norman Scott, author of a *River Of Iron* noted that there were three primary reasons for the demise of the iron industry in our area.

1. The iron ore mines couldn't compete with the large scale mining in places like Minnesota.
2. The local furnaces didn't upgrade to their peak efficiency and the
3. Cost of transportation and dependency on the railroad was the third reason.

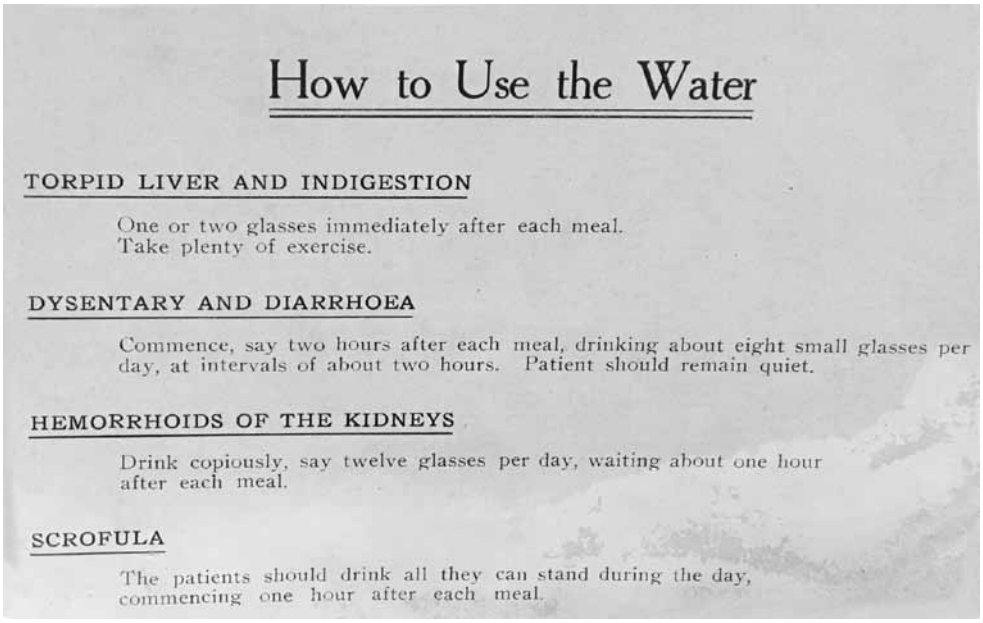
Little remains as evidence of the great iron age. If one crosses the swinging bridge at the western end of the Pass and ventures east through the woods you will come upon the few remains of the Bath Iron Works. And on coming into Goshen on Rt. 39, if you look hard, there are those few remains of the Victoria Furnace. However, for the most part, the iron age of Goshen is but a memory.



The history of Virginia's Springs is intriguing and dates back more than 200 years. The intrigue and fascination of the springs inspired detailed research and documentation from a broad range of professions, including doctors, sociologists, and geologist, to name a few. These resorts developed because of their spring waters which were acclaimed for healing most all illnesses. These waters were good for what ailed you and if nothing ailed you, well, they were good for that, too.

The resorts were quite famous and the larger ones with more modern amenities attracted visitors, both famous and ordinary, from all over the country and even abroad. Patrons came to drink the water, bathe in it, or rub it on themselves. Whether taking the waters actually cured anyone is up for debate, but there are many testimonies saying that they were certainly helpful and healthful. Some attribute this sense of well being to the fresh mountain air and the participation in the many social events of the time, rather than to the waters themselves. Most resorts had a resident physician who would prescribe the manner in which this "healing" water should be used. Here is an example:

"If the weather and other circumstances permit, rise about 6, throw your cloak on your shoulders, visit the Spring, take a small-sized tumbler of water, move about in a brisk walk, drink again at 7, once more at half past 7; breakfast at 8. After breakfast, if you can command a carriage, take a drive, otherwise a slow ride on horseback until 10. From 10-12, enjoy yourself in conversation or other mode, most agreeable to you - eat no lunch - at 12 take a glass of water, at 1 take another. From 12-1, take exercise to ten pins or billiards; dine at 2; amuse yourself in social intercourse until 5; take a drive, ride or walk, until 6, drink a glass of water; exercise until 7 - take a cracker and a cup of black tea. If you are a dancer, you may enjoy it, but in moderation, until 9 - quaff a glass of



How to Use the Water

TORPID LIVER AND INDIGESTION

One or two glasses immediately after each meal.
Take plenty of exercise.

DYSENTARY AND DIARRHOEA

Commence, say two hours after each meal, drinking about eight small glasses per day, at intervals of about two hours. Patient should remain quiet.

HEMORRHOIDS OF THE KIDNEYS

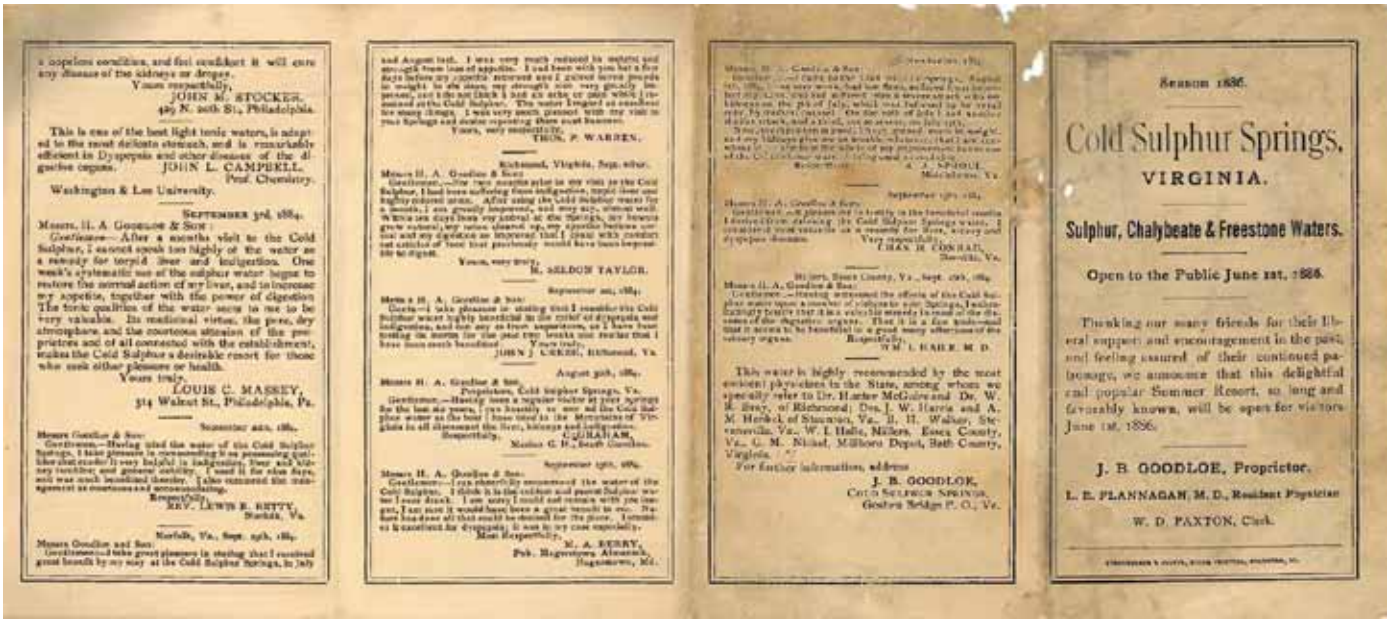
Drink copiously, say twelve glasses per day, waiting about one hour after each meal.

SCROFULA

The patients should drink all they can stand during the day, commencing one hour after each meal.

water from the spring, and retire to your room." Wow, who wouldn't feel healthier with that prescription?

Goshen was blessed with several of these resort spas. The first one to consider is Cold Sulphur Springs, once called Cold White Sulphur Springs. It was located off the intersection of Rt. 39 and Bratton's Run Road just a mile or two from the town of Goshen.



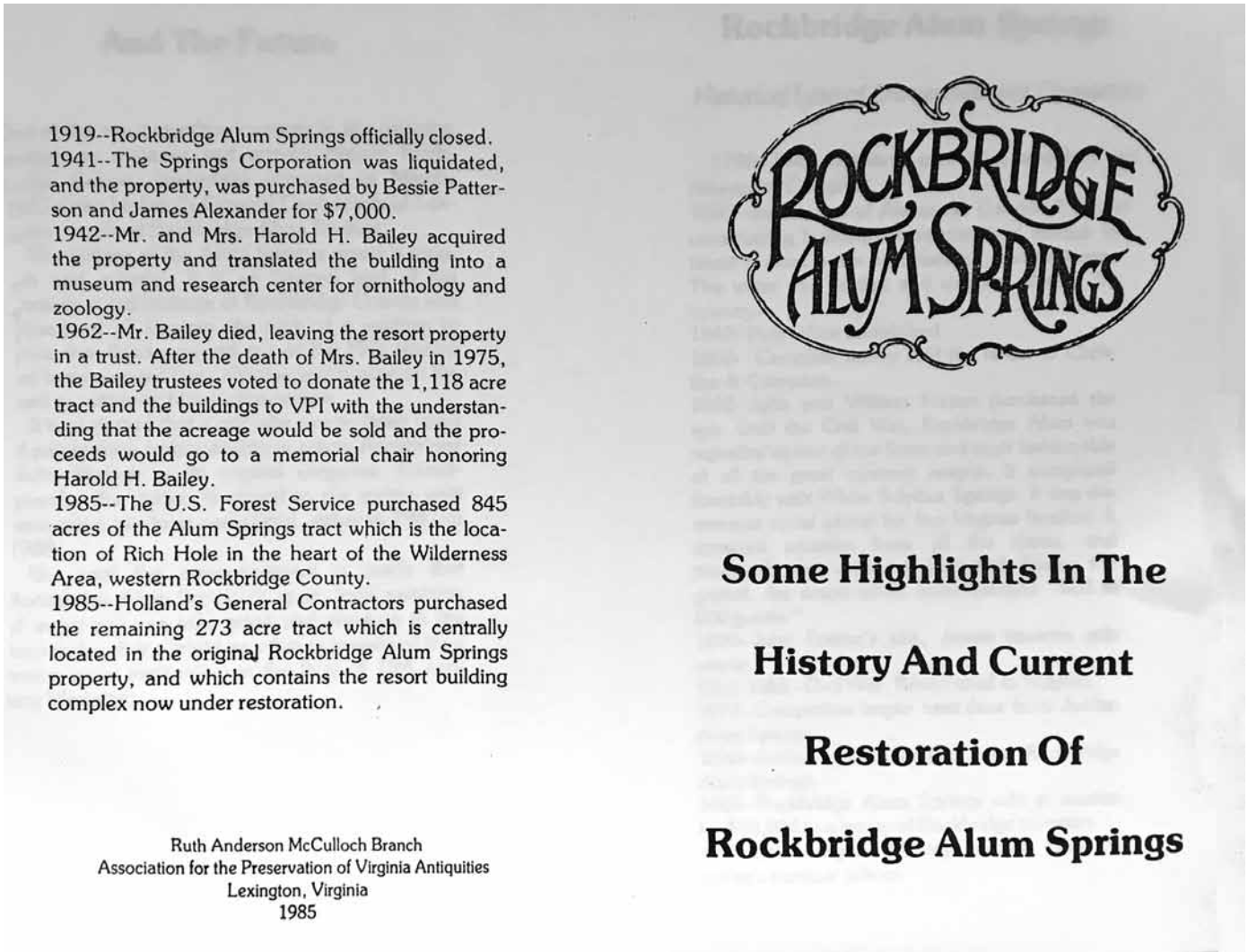
A family gathering at Cold Sulpur Springs.

Spring House at Cold Sulphur Springs. Still standing.

Even though this resort existed long before the civil war, its hey day did not come into its own until the mid-1800s. Mr. J. B. Goodloe apparently built the main hotel in 1872. It was a large three-story structure with the capacity of holding 250 persons and included a dance hall where orchestras played frequently for dances and concerts. There were also a good many cottages behind the hotel. He operated the resort until 1891 when it came under management of J. S. Craig.

In LOST LANDMARKS OF GOSHEN J. T. Allen said that, "A strange alliance between fire and automobile spelled the final door for Cold Sulphur." This alliance held true for most of the resort spas' closing. Once the automobile came along, attendance dropped at the spa and in the early 1900s, the main hotel and many of the cottages burned to the ground and were never rebuilt.

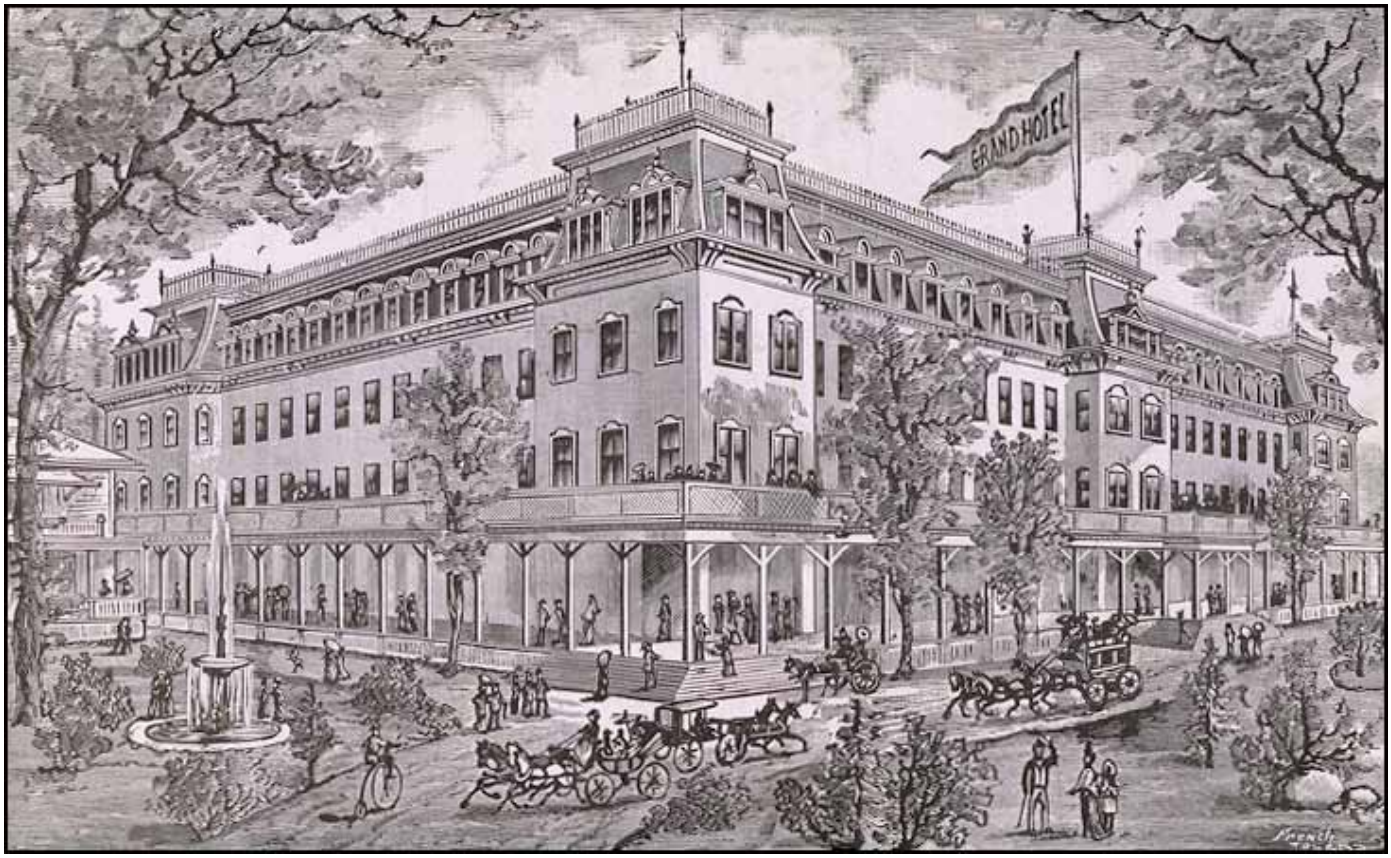
There is much more written about Rockbridge Alum Springs which, even though a bit further away, Goshen claims as a landmark. It was said to be the largest resort in the county located on 2000 acres on Bratton's Run, about 10 miles SW from the town of Goshen. The Campbell family acquired the property from John Dunlap around 1790 and began developing it in the early 1800s because of the growing interest in the alum waters on the property, but, as was most often the case, fire destroyed what was there in 1840. Not to be discouraged, construction began anew on what came to be known as the Central Hotel. In 1852 John and William Frazier purchased the spa for $150,000. At this time is was considered to be the most valuable single piece of real estate in the south.


1919--Rockbridge Alum Springs officially closed.
1941--The Springs Corporation was liquidated, and the property, was purchased by Bessie Patterson and James Alexander for $7,000.
1942--Mr. and Mrs. Harold H. Bailey acquired the property and translated the building into a museum and research center for ornithology and zoology.
1962--Mr. Bailey died, leaving the resort property in a trust. After the death of Mrs. Bailey in 1975, the Bailey trustees voted to donate the 1,118 acre tract and the buildings to VPI with the understanding that the acreage would be sold and the proceeds would go to a memorial chair honoring Harold H. Bailey.
1985--The U.S. Forest Service purchased 845 acres of the Alum Springs tract which is the location of Rich Hole in the heart of the Wilderness Area, western Rockbridge County.
1985--Holland's General Contractors purchased the remaining 273 acre tract which is centrally located in the original Rockbridge Alum Springs property, and which contains the resort building complex now under restoration.

Ruth Anderson McCulloch Branch
Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities
Lexington, Virginia
1985

ROCKBRIDGE ALUM SPRINGS

Some Highlights In The History And Current Restoration Of Rockbridge Alum Springs



Rendering of the Grand Hotel At Rockbridge Alum.

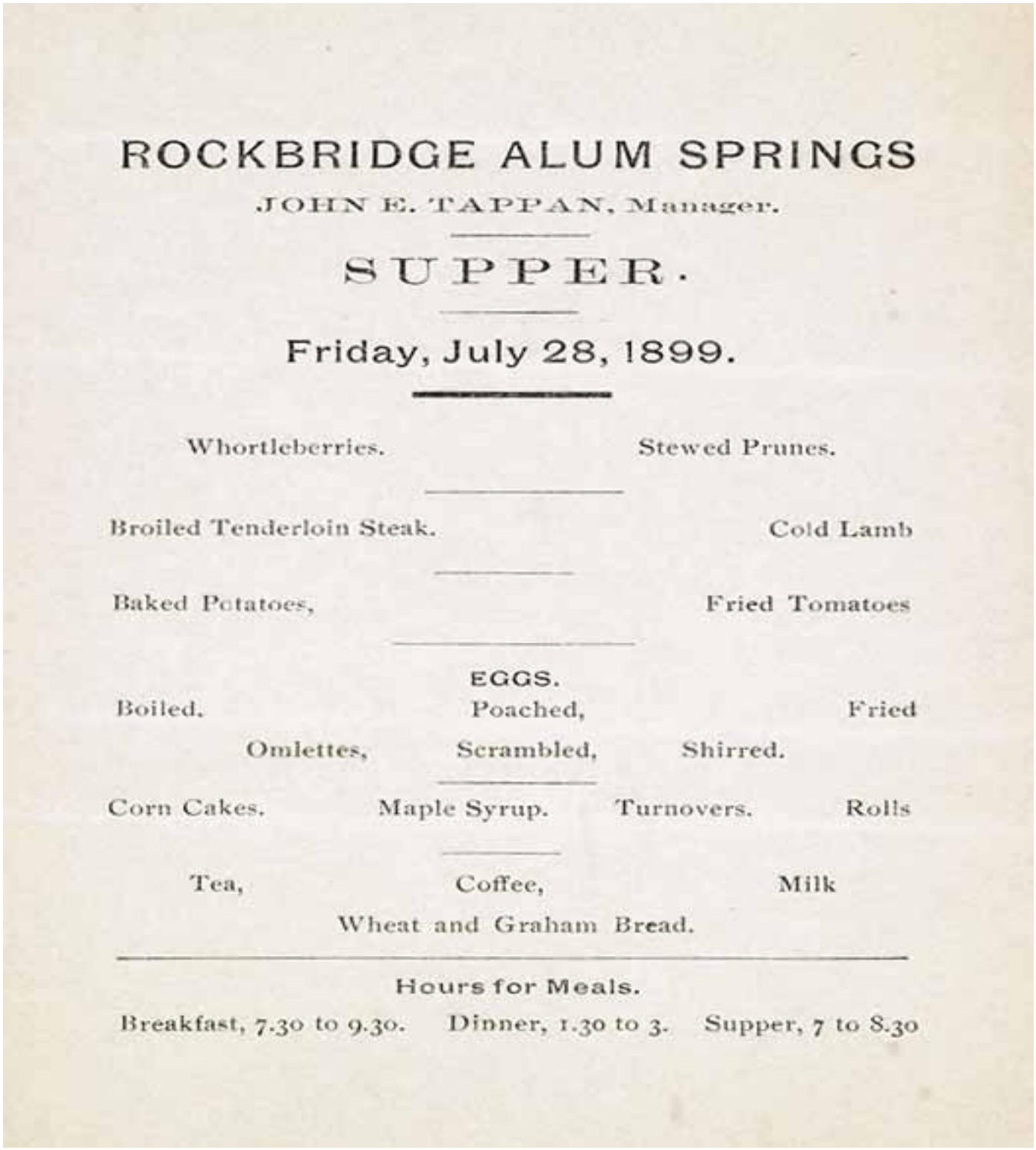
Before the Civil War, Rockbridge Alum could accommodate 600-800 guests. During the War, when most spas temporarily closed, Rockbridge Alum was used as a hospital. After the war, the resort was reopened but with competition next door of the Jordan Alum Springs. There was much contention with the two spas. John W. Jordan also built a large central hotel with detached cottages. And he added amenities so that each room had an electric bell for calling the main office and there were gas lights and a water closet on each floor. Between the late 1870s through the late 1880s there was bitter litigation between the Jordan and Rockbridge Alum. A high fence was built between the two spas and it is recorded that Rockbridge Alum Springs would not let in visitors of Jordan Springs and vice versa. It was said that employees of both places often engaged in fist fights.

Eventually the two resorts merged into the new Rockbridge Alum Springs in 1880. The fence was removed and guests were free to enjoy a covered board walk which connected the two hotels.

Probably one of the two most notable visitors, and one who caused quite a stir, was General Lee. This was in 1866 and there is an eye-witness account of an employee of the Alum who wrote:

"Lee was invited over by William Frazier, Proprietor, to rest a few days… I shall never forget the reception they gave General Lee. He rode down from Lexington on Traveler, and wore his uniform and had his knapsack on his back. The people at the Alum posted sentinels along the road to bring news of his coming, and as he turned the bend there was the biggest noise I ever heard. The guests swarmed around him cheering like mad, they pulled him off his horse and carried him to the hotel on their shoulders…
The other visitor to mention was Stonewall Jackson. He wrote to his sister:

" July 12, 1852: I arrived here yesterday in as good health as usual, and am delighted with the waters so far. The place is crowded… I succeeded in procuring half a bed, there being one room for four occupants. In a few days I hope to be better off. Boarding is ten dollars per week. This water I consider is the water of waters. My appetite and digestion have already improved, and I indulge rather freely. My dinner was principally bread, which was rather fresh, potatoes and green corn, which is by no means digestible; my supper rich corn bread, and the same for breakfast, using butter freely at each meal.
There are a few local folks who have memories of Rockbridge Alum, too. The Goshen area has produced some folks who have amazing longevity, keen minds, and a lot of pluck. Phyllis Fay Montgomery is certainly



ROCKBRIDGE ALUM SPRINGS

JOHN E. TAPPAN, Manager.

SUPPER.

Friday, July 28, 1899.

Whortleberries. Stewed Prunes.

Broiled Tenderloin Steak. Cold Lamb

Baked Potatoes, Fried Tomatoes

EGGS.

Boiled. Poached, Fried

Omlettes, Scrambled, Shirred.

Corn Cakes. Maple Syrup. Turnovers. Rolls

Tea, Coffee, Milk

Wheat and Graham Bread.

Hours for Meals.

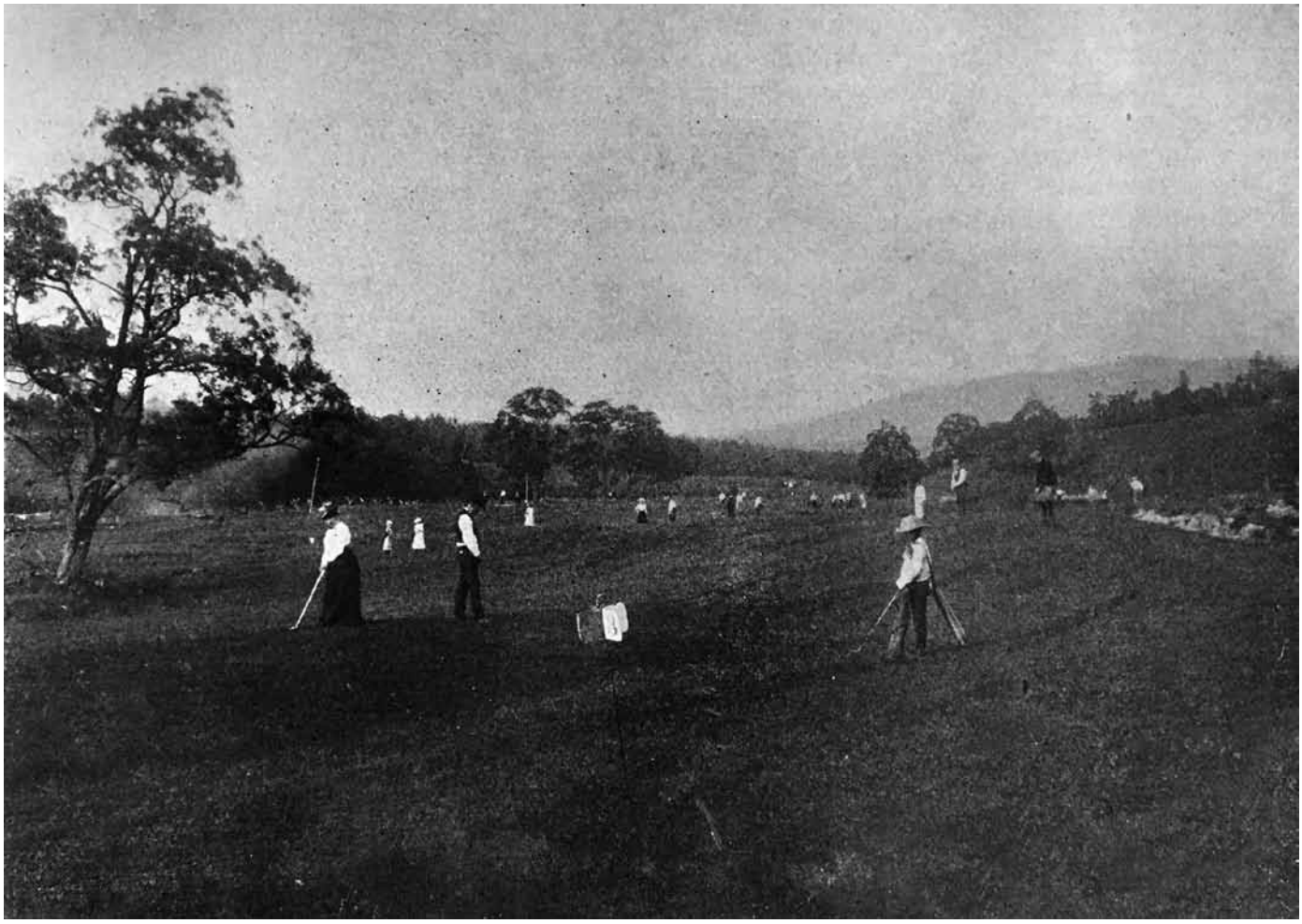
Breakfast, 7.30 to 9.30. Dinner, 1.30 to 3. Supper, 7 to 8.30

Fay Montgomery in 2017 at 95.

one of these. She was born in 1922 and says her name was so long when she was learning to write it in school that it'd have to go down the side of the page. Fay's parents were originally from the Kerrs Creek area and they moved out to Bratton's Run in the early 1900s. Her father had worked in the Longdale Furnace and when that closed down he wanted to farm. Her house, where I interviewed her, was built by her father and that's where she was born. She told me that her father had built the house there but it used to stand at Rockbridge Alum Springs. She said, "He paid $350 for the house and took it down, piece by piece, and rebuilt it here on this spot. It took him a year to rebuild it."

Fay has a beautiful water bottle from the Alum. She said, " Let me tell you something, that water wasn't easy to drink! It smelled of rotten eggs!"

Below: The house that Fay'a father tore down from Rockbridge Alum Springs and rebuilt at the crossroads of Rockbidge Alum Road and Bratttons Run. She is living there as of August, 2017.

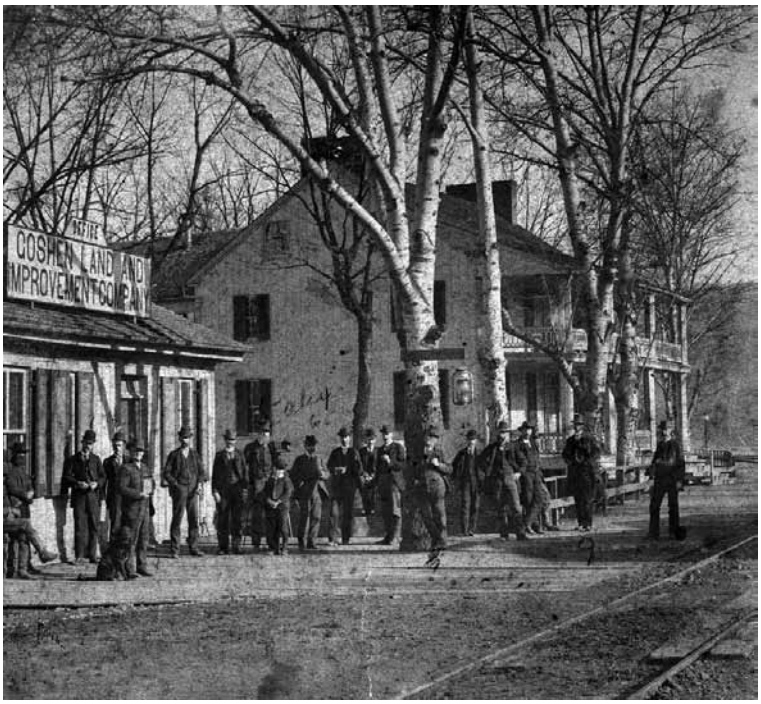


Above: Ladies and gentlemen playing golf at the Rockbridge Alum Springs Resort. circa 1890
Below: The Ball Room at Rockbrdige Alum.

As mentioned earlier, the railroad, the iron ore and furnaces, and the spas, were historically intertwined and here is another case in point. Once the main rail road line came through what was called Goshen Bridge, narrow gauge spurs were constructed to serve local entities. The narrow gauges provided the dissimilar services of moving passengers to Rockbridge Alum Springs and transporting iron ore to the Victoria Furnace. The line to transport ore was promoted by an Ohio Iron dealer who wanted the constant flow of iron to the furnace which was then carried by rail to Ohio. It was called the Victorian and Western and ran daily from the ore mines to the Victoria Furnace. James A. Frasier, manager of the Alum Springs saw the narrow gauge as a means of access to the Alum Springs. In 1889 he organized the Rockbridge Alum & Goshen Railroad. By 1892 this railroad ran two passenger trains a day from the C&O station at Goshen to the resort. Both of these railroads were abandoned in 1905, as both the iron industry and the resorts were closing down.

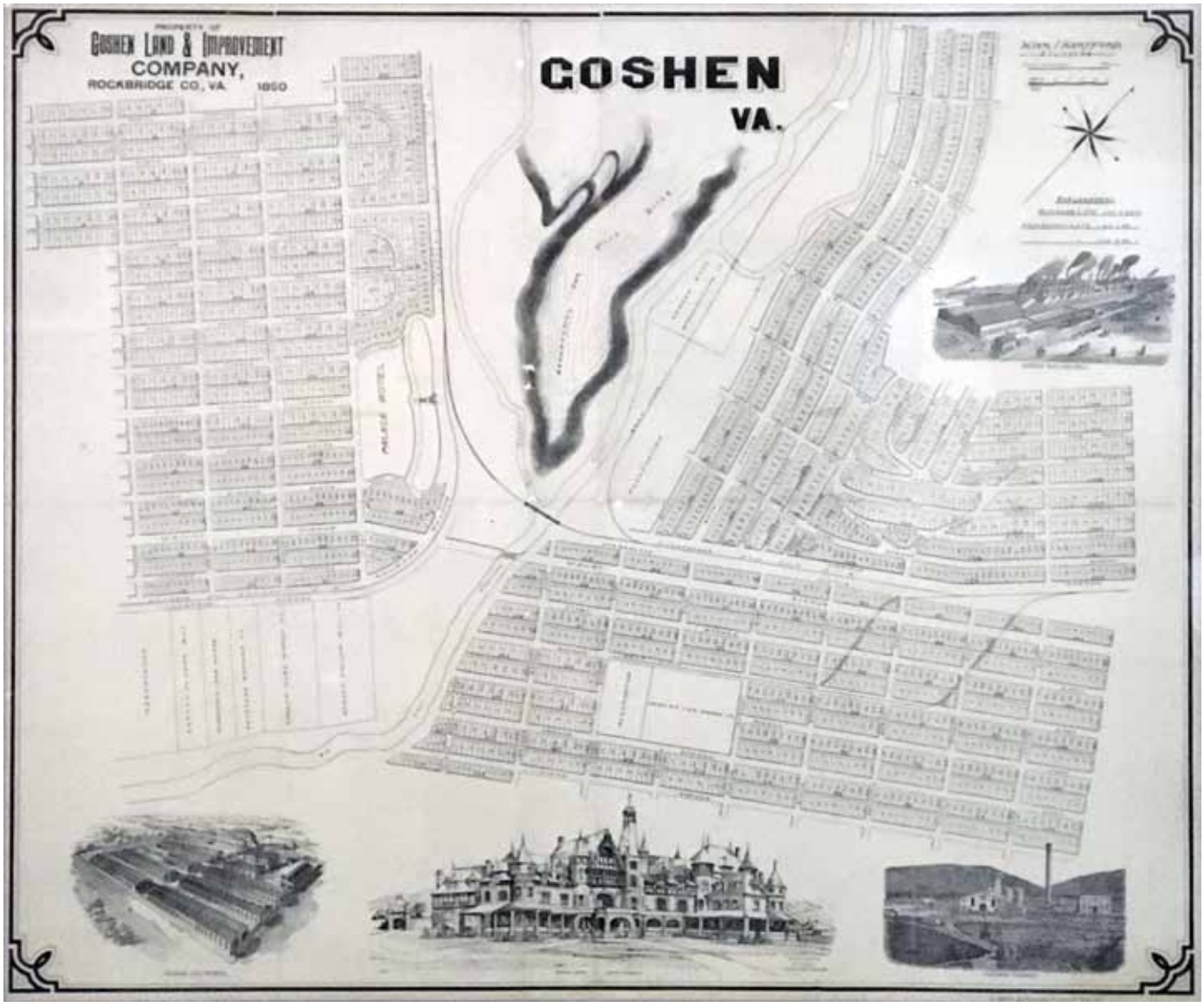
Water bottle from the Alum. Inside is an analysis of the water.

In 1890, a game changer came along. It was the Goshen Land and improvement Company. Thus began the boom years. The company consisted of street-savvy capitalist with experience in business, law, real estate development and industry. The existing infrastructure of the furnaces and spas caused these men to see no end to the possibilities for the future of Goshen.



One of the first things they established was the Goshen Blade, the town's very own newspaper whose purpose was to built up enthusiasm for the growth that they foresaw. According to the Blade, this company formed for the explicit purposes of buying and selling real estate, laying out town lots and streets,
35. Layout of the town. building iron, wood, clay, and wool and cotton factories, building water works, gas works, and electric lights and power works, building steam railways, hotels.... " and on and on with even more exaggerated and ambitious plans. They drew up a map

showing these available lots and where all of the industries were envisioned. The envisioned city began to grow.



A proposed plan for the town of Goshen in 1890 by The Goshen Land and Improvement Company.

The New York World wrote of the successes of Goshen. In one article it spoke of a huge hotel being built; that the Keystone Machine Company and Woodcock Iron works were in full operation; that a Rolling Mill was almost completed; that the Car Works is in operation; that an electric plant is being built; that the Goshen Brick Company was in full blast; and that an iron bridge over the Calfpasture is almost completed.

The 1800s had witnessed considerable economic growth in the United States fueled by industrialization, railroad expansion and other improved means of transportation and foreign investment, but toward the end of the century times became tight – very tight. A severe financial panic known as the Panic of 1893 began sweeping the nation because of a depression in the country's farm belt, a business slump abroad, and the drain on the Treasury's Gold reserve. This severe economic depression was felt throughout the country and it was felt in the little town of Goshen. Over the span of a few years the boom came and went leaving the town of Goshen a quiet, rural haven in an ever growing world.

Many of these grandiose plans never came to fruition before the boom went bust. But some that did certainly are important to the town's history. One of them was the steel bridge over the Calfpasture.

This beautiful bridge has a fascinating history and is unique because it is one of the few historical landmarks of Goshen that is still standing and in use. When it was built in 1890 is was a symbol of Goshen's strength as well as a symbol of the industrial boom. Before and after that time the main road going from Goshen in the northeast and southwest directions crossed the Calfpasture River, first by fording, and then by this bridge. However, in the early to mid 1900s, this road was changed to where it is today and the bridge leads to a dead-end at Cameron Hall. The bridge was built jointly by the Goshen Land and Improvement Company and Rockbridge County in 1890 and cost $16,00. It was reported in the Goshen Blade, in June of 1891, that the bridge was 270 feet long "and of sufficient width to accommodate a street car line in the center, a

roadway on each side, and a sidewalk six feet wide." The so called superstructure of the bridge was built by the Groton Bridge and Manufacturing Company of Groton, New York. Locals, George H. Cameron and M. H. Johnson were contracted for the abutments. David Carlisle Humphreys was the engineer in charge of the construction. Mr. Humphreys, at the time, held the position of professor of engineering at Washington and Lee, the very place from which he graduated in 1878.

As we have seen the futuristic thoughts and plans of Goshen becoming a huge industrial city were almost mind boggling. And even though these plans all went south eventually, a monumental task of dismantling and rebuilding this bridge was undertaken in 2002 to preserve its symbolism and historical significance. This bridge was taken down, piece by piece, hauled off to North Carolina where it was sand blasted, where damaged steel parts

Dismateling of the bridge.

Acid Bath of Bridge Parts.

were remade, and where the steel was galvanized for protection to perhaps allow the bridge to span its third century.

The process of refurbishing the bridge was fascinating. The steel beams were put in a caustic bath, then rinsed, then an acid bath, rinsed again, dried and then dipped in a molten zinc galvanizing liquid which was about 850 degrees Fahrenheit. It was left in that mixture until the steel reached that temperature then it was placed in a water bath and rinsed to cool.

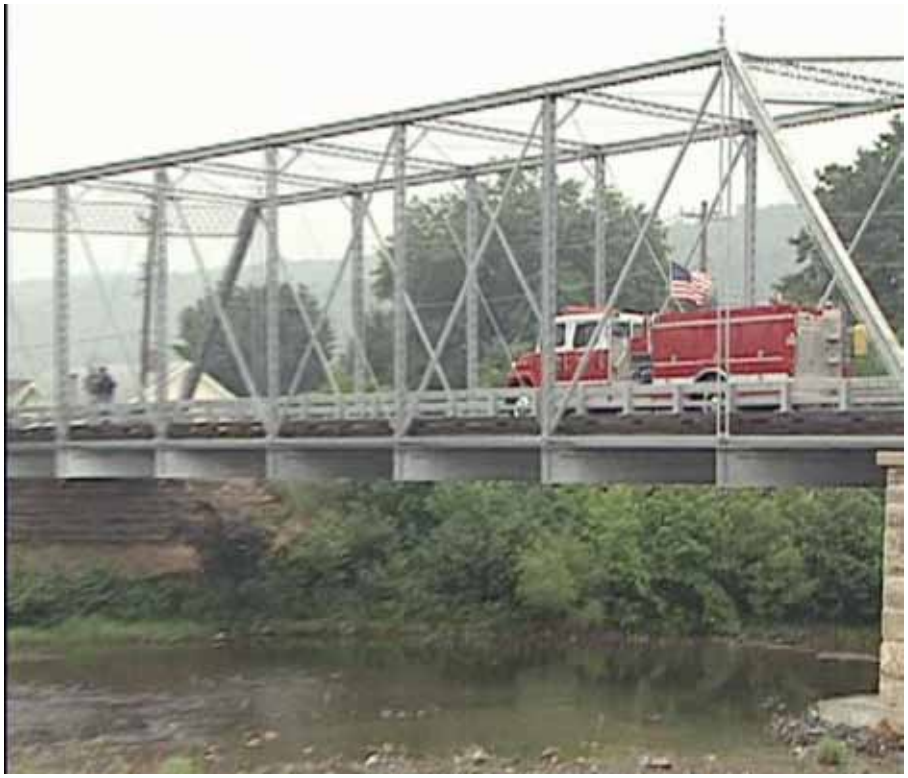
Once everything was cleaned and remade and upgraded, the parts were hauled back to Goshen and the bridge was put back together much in the same way it was originally built, piece by piece.

Kathleen Kilpatrick, director of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources says, "It's no secret that the strongest communities are not the cookie-cutter communities and subdivisions, but places like Goshen that have a sense of character and identity and connectedness to their past… And what better symbol of that important connectedness is there than a bridge?"

Another unique part of Goshen's past is Cameron Hall. As mentioned, it sits at the end of the dead end road serviced by the steel bridge. The property on which Cameron Hall sits was first obtained through the Benjamin Borden Land Grant in 1745 by John Bratton, one of the earliest settlers in this area. From 1812 to 1826,

Above:: Galvanizing the steel beams. Below: Putting the bridge back together, piece by piece.

Above: Ribbon Cutting for bridge reopening. Below: Mike Jolly driving the Goshen Fire truck across the new bridge.



the property was deeded to various members of the Bell family, also early settlers. In 1826, Joseph Bell built the two-story brick home. I had the honor of chatting with
Ellen Cameron Gray, Joseph Bell's granddaughter. She lives in Staunton and is 96 years old. She was born at Cameron Hall, lived there, and was married there. Her grandmother Cameron bought the property and named it Cameron Hall and eventually her parents, Addison and Cameron Bell, ran a tourist home there.

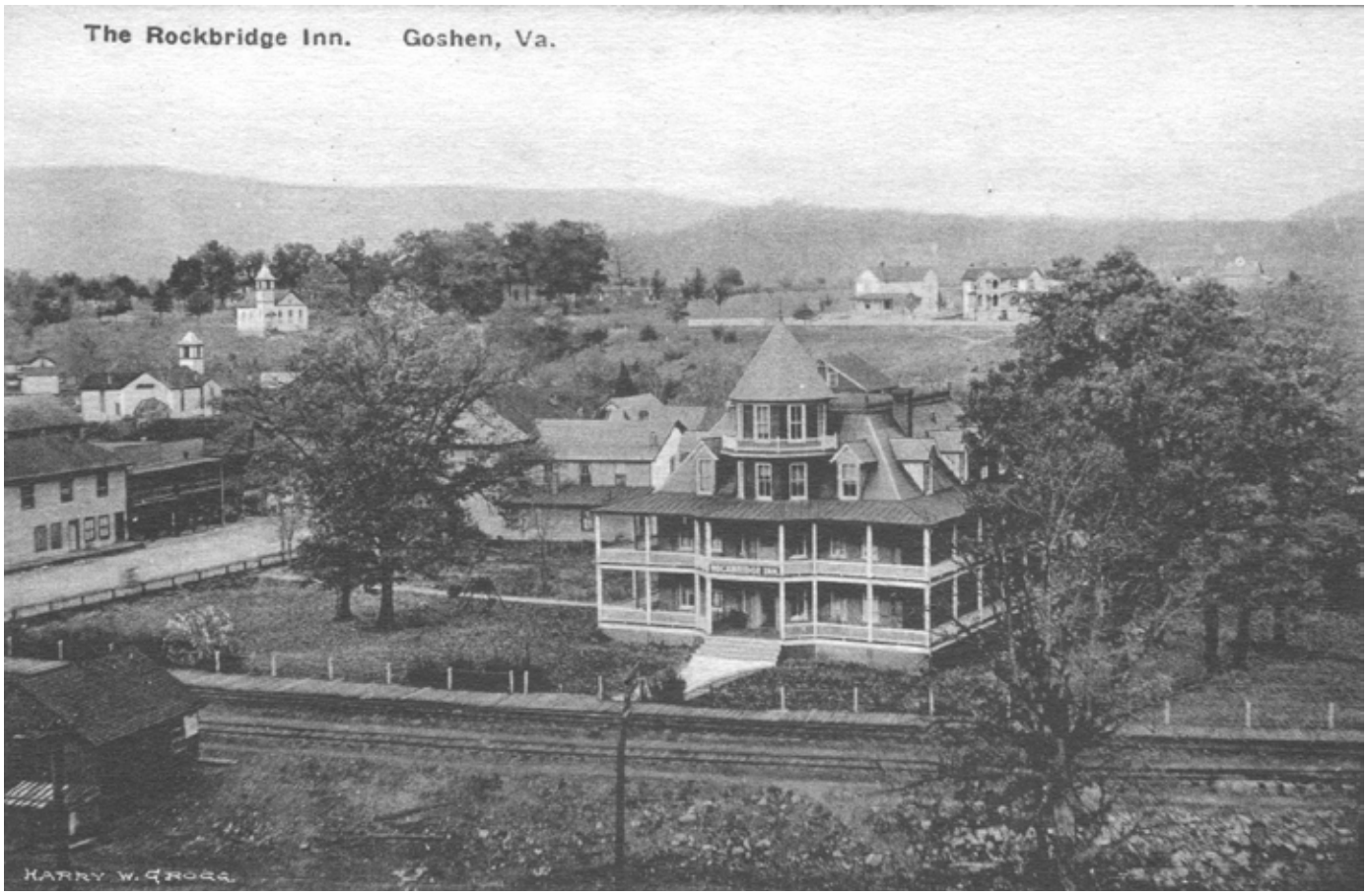
Cameron Hall. Circa 1920.

She relates that the home was opened only four months of the year from May- August. Many of the guest were travelers headed to the Homestead and if day was drawing neigh, they stayed there to avoid crossing Warm Springs Mountain at night. According to Ellen, the home had eighteen rooms so there were always a lot of people around.

The Goshen Land and Improvement Company orchestrated the building of the Alleghany Hotel in 1891 as a way to entice investors and visitors in the area. Building a huge hotel was usually the first thing these land companies in the county did.

Ellen Cameron Gray. T-shirt - Please pray for me. I need the prayers you need the practice.

Joseph Bell and 8 month old Ad Bell.



Rockbridge Inn. Another sizable hotel in Goshen which eventually burned in a town fire.

When it was built it was called the "Palace" then later the Alleghany Hotel. There exists some speculations that the hotel was designed by Stanford White, the famed American architect from New York. But years ago, Royster Lyle dug into this so deeply as to put that thought to rest. White may have been a visitor or maybe had some connection to a member of the Goshen Land and Improvement Company, either of which could spawn that idea. According to J. T. Allen, "Life at the hotel was gay and easy. The tennis court and swimming pool provided entertainment for the late mornings and early afternoons. Also, sometime during each afternoon, the orchestra

presented a concert. After supper, the guests either sat on the porch enjoying the coolness of the evening or went for walks around the grounds. Then as darkness started to fall, the orchestra began to play. Soon the ballroom floor was crowded with dancers. Townspeople were not permitted to attend the dances, but some of the older ones still tell how much they enjoyed standing on the porches watching those on the inside.

Ann Dwyer, who wrote "Barefoot Summers" based on her father's regular visits to Goshen, relates that one of the most interesting entertainments at the hotel was actually a promenade down the long steps to the train station. Once on the platform, the guest, who were dressed to the nines, socialized and excitedly waiting for the afternoon train to come through.

The Alleghany had a short but very popular existence before its decline. In early 1923, it was sold to a group of doctors who purportedly wanted to convert it into a sanatorium. But that never happened. On Thanksgiving Day, in 1923, the hotel burned to the ground. As you can imagine it must have been a shock to the town to witness that blaze. Ellen Cameron Gray, whom I mentioned earlier, told me that she actually remembers the day the hotel burned! She was 3 at the time and remembers her view of fire and smoke from the porch of Cameron Hall.

J. T. Allen, shown above, was the author of Lost Land Marks of Goshen. Photo by Lee Shifflitt.

The railroad is still very much present in the town's life today. Railroad buffs across the country have written much about Goshen's railroad, both its narrow garage and regular trains. There is a Goshen resident, Buster Carter, who is ninety years old and who worked

The lobby of the Alleghany Hotel.

Photo of the Alleghany taken by Ann Dwyer's father.

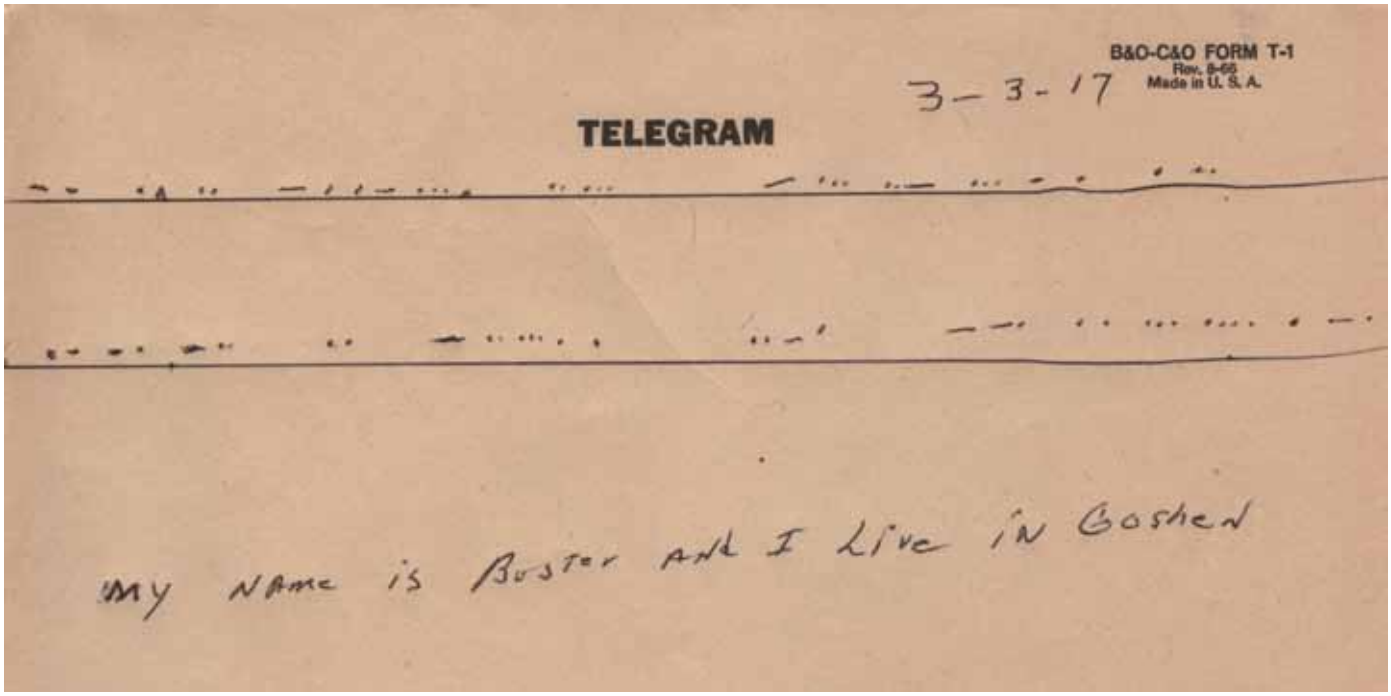
for the railroad for 44 years. He has some stories to tell and graciously shared a few with me.
Buster grew up in Goshen on his grandparents farm. He graduated high school when he was seventeen and went to work on the railroad for the next 44 plus years. He was a station agent for the railroad and worked all over Virginia at stations in Swoope, Natural Bridge, Millboro, Craigsville and even East Lexington where he remembers when cow hides we trained up from Buena Vista on gondola cars and he had to weight them.

He said, "The cars were too long and we would have to weigh one end at a time, then add them together to get the weight on them.

Buster also was the telegraph wizard at these jobs. He still remembers morse code very well and wrote a sentence for me on some of the old C&O telegraph paper.

When Buster was little he would go down to the train station with his Grandfather Withrow who was the agent there. He remembers, "He would send me up the steps to a platform and they had a hook up there and I'd raise the hook up with the mail bag on it and when the train came by they grabbed the mailbag and pulled it into the mail

Buster Carter (Hobson Dewey Carter)



room on the train. To leave the mail, they would just throw it out on the ground. Most of the time they'd try to hit you with it. This happened twice a day and the train was moving pretty fast for the exchange of mail." Also as a young boy he remembers that during World War II his grandfather was the mayor of Goshen and there were drills where he and a few other boys got on their bikes and rode around telling people to turn off their lights and pull their shades. And he says at the time there were armed guards at the railroad bridge, too.

Lee Shifflet, also related a story about World War II times in Goshen. Lee spent his summers in Goshen on

his grandparents McDonalds' farm which was flooded in the 70s to create the Boy Scout Lake, Lake Merriweather.

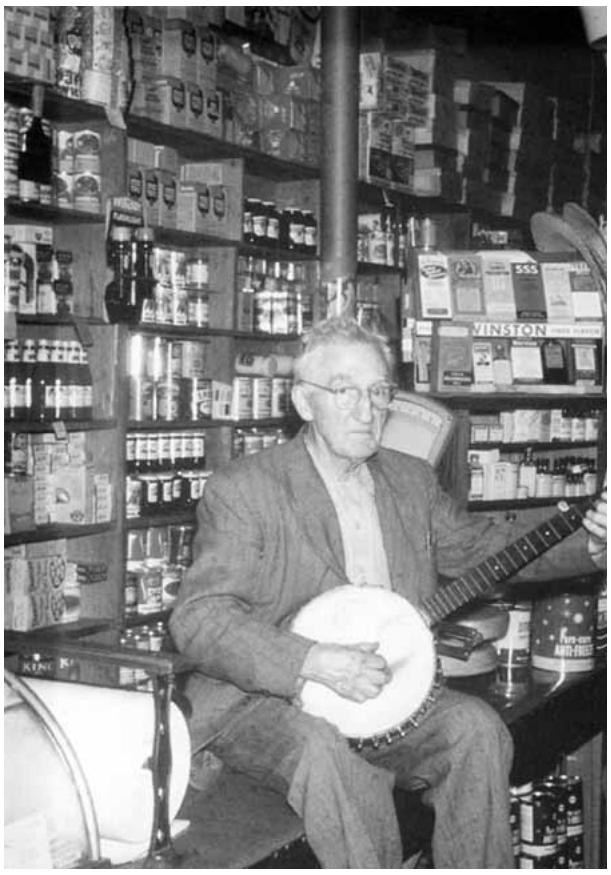
He said, " In my youngest years, when I was in Goshen, it was war time. Everyone was worried. Rob McDonald was flying "The Hump" over the Himalayas for Air Transport Command. There was no electricity or indoor plumbing at the time. We listened to news on battery powered radio, and Grandma read the Bible every night by a coal-lit oil lamp. It was a happy time for me, but I do recall the uneasiness caused by the war. This special closeness to Goshen stayed with me until those I call "The Major Players" all passed away. It was sad to accept that even "special places" are not there forever. But memories do last forever."
The 1940 and 50s returned Goshen to its rural, more quiet beginnings. There are a few things of note during

McDonald's farm on Little River before it was flooded for the Boy Scouts of America's Lake Merriweather.

this time period, though. For instance there were six little grocery stores in Goshen. Goshen grocery, run by Will Roadcap; Janes' Grocery, run by Jane Withrow Turnage; Thornton's Grocery, run by "Heavy" Throton; Nunn's store; Wilhem's Store, run by Oma Wilhelm; McDonald's Store which was up on Little River Road. According to Shirley Rorer, a life long resident of Goshen, there was even a movie theatre in town. It was located just as you turn up Allehany Hill and Clay Ayers owned it. "We went to the movies all of the time," exclaimed Shirley.

Still Water Mills annual employee dinner. Still Water Mills and Locher Silica employed many of the town residents. Still Water was a well established textile industry which had a long run in the town. At one

Lake Merriweather. Photo by Michael Godfrey.



Above: Degrassi's Restaurant with J. T. Allen in front. Right: John McDonald playing his banjo in McDonald's store.

Above: McDonald's store on Little River. Below Al Parent's garage.

Wilhelm's Store, above and below.

time Eleanor Roosevelt came to Goshen to visit the mills. She stayed overnight at the Teter-Woods home by the railroad, which is now the Hummingbird Inn, Goshen's very own bed and breakfast.

The fancy resort hotels, the iron furnaces, the many industries, the narrow gauge railroads to the iron ore mines and most of all the over exaggerated notion that Goshen was going to become the Pittsburg of the south, are all but lost to the archives. Even those six grocery stores and the movie Theater are gone. There were once 2000 folks living in Goshen! Today there are around 400 residents. How does a town survive these

Company dinner at Stillwater Mills.

Drone Aerials of Stillwater Mills. Photo by Anne McClung and Laurie Lipscomb. 2017

Circa: late 1800s. Goshen houses on the left on the road heading towards Panther Gap.

Near Cameron Hall. Pilots with old war planes used to go into rural areas and take folks up for a ride, for a fee, of course. 1920s or 30s?

The Hummingbird Inn. Formerly referred to as the Teter-Woods Home.

losses? The aspects of life in Goshen which survived the boom are perhaps those most established in any community and they are religion and education. These two aspects are what may have held the community together. The evolution of the school for Goshen's children is long and interesting. There is a wonderful little history of the schools in the Goshen Library. The first school was log and built in 1829. The students used soapstone found on the creek banks to write their lessons.

The school was housed in a few other buildings and locations until 1916 when a frame building was created on

Horse and carriage in front of the Teter-Woods Home. 1898.

the grounds next to the Goshen Presbyterian Church. This was used as the grade school and high school until 1933, at which time the building, which now serves as the Goshen Library, was built. Around 1960 expansion of the brick school was made and the old frame structure was torn down. So all of the grades were held in various parts of the brick school.

Up until the mid 1800s there were few blacks in the area. Once the blasting furnaces started up, hotels came, and the railroad came through, there were a good number of blacks living here. They had their own school, and it was located just outside of Goshen. The school has been repurposed as a residence. One of this school's former teachers just celebrated her 100th birthday. She is Irma Thompson from Buena Vista. Irma got her first teaching job in Goshen in 1938. As the population dwindled, it was in

Above: Old frame School building. 1916. Below: 1936 May Queen Gabrielle Griffith, Audy Griffith's aunt.

the mid 1960s that Goshen schools were beginning to be phased out. It was a painful experience for the Goshen residents to be without their own school. It was said that those raised in Goshen enjoyed one of the finest public educations a town could offer due to the concern of the elder citizens and the insistence on perfection.
Through thick and thin, religion and places of worship have held strong in Goshen.

Many of the early settlers left Europe to seek religious freedom, so foremost in their minds was to create their own places of worship. The Goshen Presbyterian Church, pictured below, was built in 1860. The minister for this church is John Haney from Millboro.

The United Methodist church was erected quite a bit later in 1934. Its pastor is Mary Pysell from Criagsville.

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Above: United Methodist church.
Left: The First Baptist Church of Goshen.

The oldest church in the community is the Goshen Baptist Church shown above whose first version was built down along Mill Creek in 1820. Then around 1860 a newer church was built. It burned and now Goshen has this church. Scott Reese is the pastor and Shirley Rorer plays the piano for the services.

As mentioned previously, at one time, during the boom years there were ample job opportunities to support a sizable black community and they built their own church which still stands today, just outside of Goshen, but is slowly becoming one with nature. It was called the First Baptist Church of Goshen, founded in 1890

Drone of Pass looking East.

GOSHEN PASS

We cannot end this story without talking about Goshen Pass.

Goshen Pass lies just a few miles to the east of the town of Goshen. The four mile gorge through the mountains has a rich and unique history itself and it is known and loved and enjoyed by many. It was Matthew Fontaine Maury, the famed scientist of the seas and professor of physics at VMI, who gave statewide, if not nationwide, recognition to the beauty of the Pass. And because of him the North River came to be called the Maury River in 1945.

Goshen Pass was known as Dunlap's Gap in the mid 1700s, deriving its name from the Alexander Dunlap family who settled large tracts of land in and around where the town of Goshen is now. Around 1800 the name was changed to Strickler's Pass. This name came from Daniel Strickler who purchased the property which came to be known as Wilson Springs. Strickler died in 1843 and the land on the eastern slope of the Pass was sold to William A. Wilson. Hence Strickler's Springs became known as Wilson Springs. Strickler's Pass did not become Wilson's Pass but eventually became Goshen Pass, this time deriving it name from the town of Goshen.

There are a few things of importance about the Pass that I'd like to share briefly with you. First, there are the

two monuments that proudly stand at Laurel Run very nearby the Royster Lyle Picnic shelter. The main monument (above) was erected and unveiled in the honor of Matthew Fountaine Maury in 1923. According to news articles several thousand persons attended this grand unveiling. Maury, like so many, had such admiration for the Pass that probably all of us know the story of how he asked that upon his death his body be carried through the Pass in the springtime and boughs of mountain laurel and rhododendron be laid upon his casket. He, of course was to be buried in Richmond but had to travel through the Pass to the town of Goshen where his remains would go by rail to his final resting place.

Perry Foundation marker. (right) There is one other monument in the pass. As we shall learn, the Pass has continually been under threat. This monument is dedicated to the Perry Foundation of Charlottesville, Virginia. Early in 1954, the northeast slope consisting of around 900 acres, of the Pass was threatened by timber cutting operations. Various interest groups, including the Garden Club of Virginia, pulled together to bring the matter before the General Assembly and a

move was on foot to purchase this property and turn it over to the State as a forest preserve. The matter was finally resolved by the Perry Foundation, which donated $17,000 to the state for the purchase of the timber rights from the contractor and for the purchase of the land. What was the Perry Foundation's interest in Goshen Pass? Indications were that it was simply a love of the Pass.

There was another, even more drastic, attempt to ruin the Pass – this was in 1929, by the Virginia Public Service Company, the corporate grandparent of Dominion Power. The Company's plan was to block Goshen Pass with a dam and to flume the water under high pressure to a power plant downstream to be built in the neighborhood of Wilson Springs, another beloved icon of our county. The dam, to be about sixty-three feet high and 450 feet long, would be located just below the junction of the Big and Little Calfpasture Rivers. It would back up water on Little River for 6.8 miles and on Big River 5.2 miles. The Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors had endorsed the power company's plan!

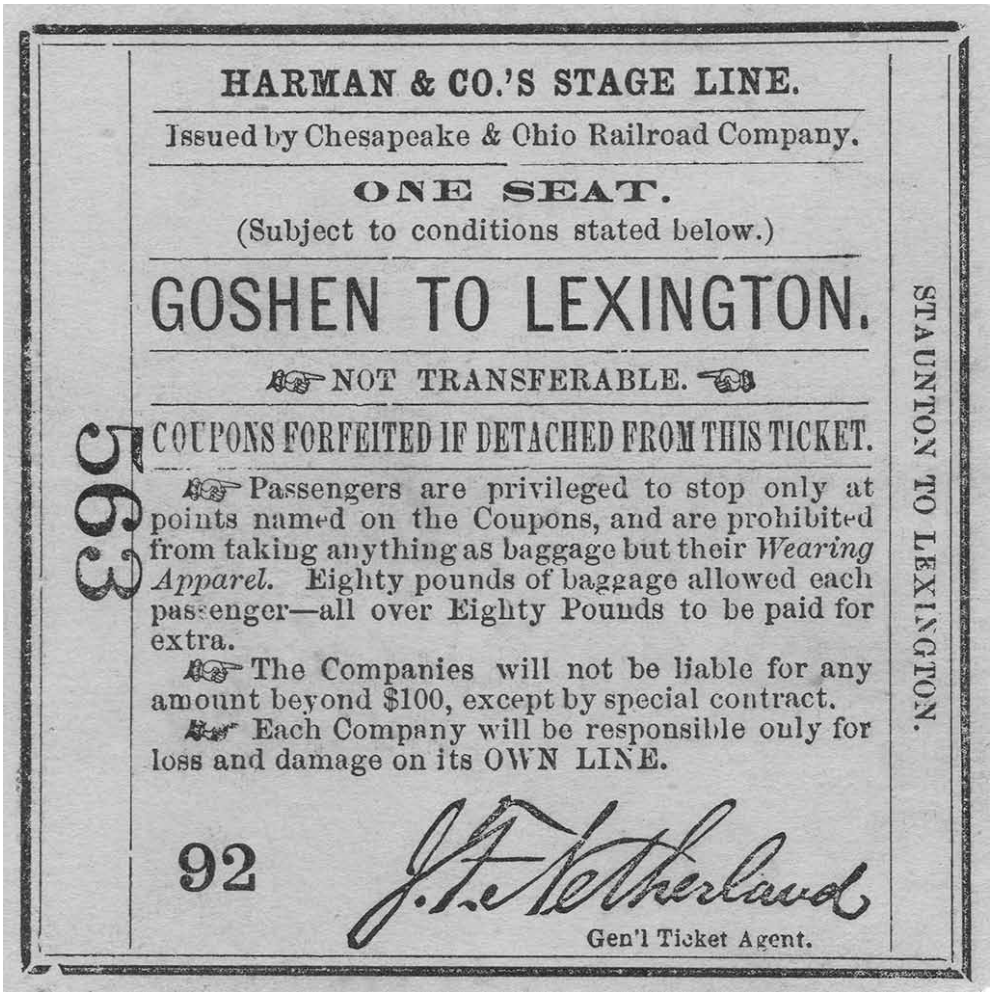
But the opposition was sounded several weeks later by Dr. William Davis Hoyt, a professor of biology at W&L. Dr. Hoyt led the long and bitter fight against the power project. During hearings to oppose to this egregious plan, upwards of 100 garden club units from all over Virginia joined in the opposition, along with units of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, the Business and Professional Women's Club, the YWCA of Staunton and the Virginia Academy of Science. This force proved too much and after a bitter battle, County News reported on February 13, 1930, that the Goshen hydroelectric development had been postponed due to litigation by the Garden Clubs of Virginia. Postponed really meant squelched as the topic never reared its ugly head again.

Man is not the only one to threaten the Pass. Mother Nature has taken several turns in reshaping and temporarily destroying it. The flood of 1985 was perhaps the most damaging to the Pass. Miles of Route 39 through the Pass were washed out and the road was closed for about six to eight months. The Pass was significantly changed by this flood, but till defiantly holds the magic and beauty that it has always held.

Most recently fire roared through the Pass burning about 3000 acres of the mountainous terrain above the river. Fortunately it was eventually contained with minimal damage and some say may even have done the flora a lot of good.

And finally, a word about the road that runs through Goshen Pass. It in itself is a fascinating study. At one time it was no more than a stagecoach road leading to the train depot in the town of Goshen. Old timers in the area say that the road on the western side of the Pass crossed back and forth over the river before it was permanently settled on the southern side, where it is today. One can still see the remnants of supporting stone walls where the road was once on the north side of the river. One time resident, Andy Graham clearly remembered watching the native trout swim quickly away as his family's car forded the stream. Long

before Andy's time, a David McRae made the stage trip with General Lee through the Pass in 1868, and left this account of the journey. "We had not left Goshen far behind before the coach began to jolt tremendously. I asked the boy why the roads were not kept in better order. Oh, he said, just as a sudden lurch threw him into my lap, "this ain't nuthin. It is kinder smooth. It gets worse.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The two best-known stage coaches were the Richmond Belle and the Baltimore Belle. The door panels were decorated with ovals, each containing the portrait of a beautiful maiden . . . perhaps this was designed to take the traveler's mind off the bumps."

Convict labor modernized this old dirt stagecoach road in the Pass in the late 1920s and early 30s. In the early 1900s state penitentiaries were dealing with their most persistent problem, one we still have today, overcrowding. One of the methods to overcome this was to put the prisoners to work improving and building new roads. Convict road camps came to be operated cooperatively by the penitentiary and the State Highway Commission. A camp was set up across from the entrance of the Boy Scout Camps and a one time resident, George Earman, was the captain of the convict crew that built the road. These shackled prisoners put in a full day of work on the road, with armed guards standing by. Not only did these prisoners build the road that now lazily winds through the Pass but they also built many of the stone walls, made of massive pieces of limestone, some as long as six feet, which lie on either side of the road. Imagine doing this shackled, with bare hands and little to no machinery. These prisoner were chained to their cots at night. They had no freedoms. No recreation. To further illuminate the convicts' situation, a Goshen resident, Charles Hileman, related to me a vivid childhood memory. His father was a doctor at that time and was often called to the road camp when a prisoner was to be beaten as punishment. Apparently the law said a doctor had to be present for such punishment; his role was to stop the beatings before death occurred and then to tend to the wounded man. It gives one pause to think that so often the labor and talents of the downtrodden, the poor, and in this case the imprisoned create for us such beautiful works of art to both use and appreciate. So it is with the roadway through Goshen Pass.

Those who live here, seem to take pride in their town and we wish them the best in shaping Goshen's future because so many of us love it now and love its splendid history.

The old road going through the pass before it was mordernized in the 1920s.

1915 Ford driven by Joe C. Graham, on the old road near Devil's Kitchen.

Drone photo of Goshen Pass looking west. Anne McClung and Laurie Lipscomb. 2017.