Yesteryears

Vol. 1, No. 4 | Saturday, June 29, 1991 | 50 Cents

Coal mining has rich, colorful history

By Dale Shaffer and Roland Smith

THOSE OF US GROWING up in the city in the 1930s and '40s gave little thought to where the coal came from that heated our homes and kept us warm. We knew our country had huge deposits. We also knew that our parents, in preparation for winter, ordered truckloads of the stuff to fill our coal cellars. The sound of coal being shoveled and shoved down chutes was a common one heard every fall. But there was, of course, much more to know about the mining of this valuable commodity.

Coal mining in our area has a rich and interesting history although not much has been written about it. At one time it was a big industry affecting the lives of many people. The work involved land owners, mine operators, mine bosses and superintendents, miners, railroaders, haulers and builders. It took a lot of effort to open a mine, extract coal from it in a profitable manner, maintain it, and then see that the product was delivered to many scattered points of consumption. The work played a very important part in the industrial development of our area and country.

In the 1880s and several decades after the turn of the century there were a large number of mines located to the north and east of Salem; that is, in the area of the Egypt Road, New Albany, Route 165, Millville and Beaver Creek Road. Their locations are evident from the large mounts of slate removed from the mine openings.

They were owned and operated by many different individuals and companies. It seemed that almost anyone with a pick and shovel could start his own mine. Every one of them cannot, of course, be discussed in the space of this article.

Most of the coal mined here was bituminous, not anthracite. Bituminous was plentiful and extensively used in industry,
by the steam engines of the railroads and for making coke. Softer than anthracite, it burned readily and did not crumble.

Anthracite is very hard coal with a high carbon content. When burned it gives off a smokeless flame and intense heat. Used for domestic fuel and by blacksmiths of the past, it is more expensive than bituminous.

The three veins of coal in this area were the No. 3 Clarion Vein, the No. 4 Mercer Vein and the No. 5 Kittaning Vein. Thickness of seams varied from 2 to 4 feet, with a cover of from 30 to 40 feet between the veins.

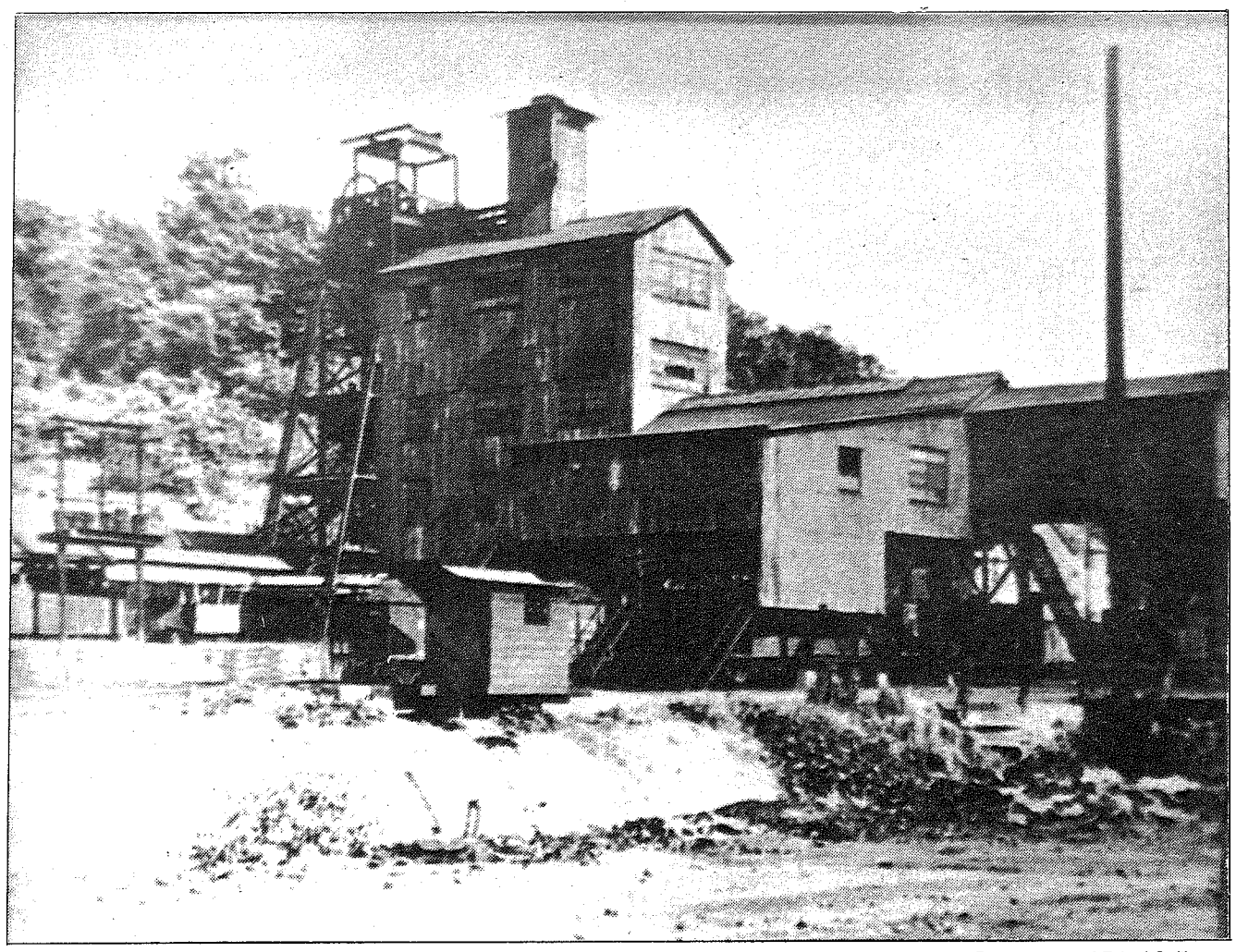

Photo courtesy of Roland Smith

This 1915 photo, taken looking east, shows the tipple of the Salem Mining Co. once located on the south side of Route 14 at the bottom of Millville Hill outside Salem. Coal was taken up the hoist at left and then screened through a shaking apparatus.

The mines were of two basic types: the shaft mine which had a vertical entrance with horizontal levels opening out of the shaft; and the drift mine which had a sloping entrance. Method of mining depended on various factors — depth of coal deposit, contour of land, character of the coal, inclination and thickness of the seam, available tonnage and roof pressure.

During the early years, the "pillar method" of mining was most common. Pillars of ore supported the roof. A main entry was cut along the seams or on both sides, and then rooms created off to the side. End-grains of the coal seen in the rooms were called "butts," while the long grain from which the coal was cut was called the "face."

Recovery of coal using this method was limited

Turn to MINES on page 4

Tragedy in the coal mine

By Lois Firestone

It was a frigid day early in the year 1923, on January 4, and by noon the thermometer had dropped to freezing. Edward Roessler was working deep underground in the mine — he'd been laboring since dawn — when, without warning, the roof collapsed. His brother John, a fellow cutter, had left only ten minutes earlier and was hurrying back when he heard the ominous sound of falling slate and rocks.

The 49-year-old father of seven was buried and horribly crushed under nearly three tons of debris. The scene was the Pascola Coal Co. mine along the Washingtonville Road just outside of Salem, one of many operating in the area in the 1920s. Roessler had been working for the company for five years; it was an easy walk from the family home at 59 Fair Ave. in Salem to the job site.

The late Charles "Chic" Roessler told me the sad story of his father's unexpected death several years ago; his mother was left with the overwhelming task of raising the children, Chris, Charles, Keith, James, Reva, Grace and Virginia. But she did it. Always a closely knit family, they banded together and the children excelled at sports and academics throughout their high school days.

The tragedy was one which was repeated many times over the years because working the mines was a dangerous business. And it had been a treacherous occupation for decades. It wouldn't be until the 1940s and the emergence of the miner's powerful spokesman John L. Lewis that conditions would change, but too late for men like Edward Roessler.

Don't miss out, folks!

Today will be the last time *Yesteryears* will be inserted in your Saturday issue of the *Salem News*.

You can receive our new weekly for $13 a year — that's 52 issues of interesting stories and photographs from past years — which is a special discount offer which expires July 31.

Yesteryears

A weekly historical journal
Published by the Salem News
Founded June 29, 1991
161 N. Lincoln Ave.
Salem, Ohio 44460
Phone (216) 332-4601

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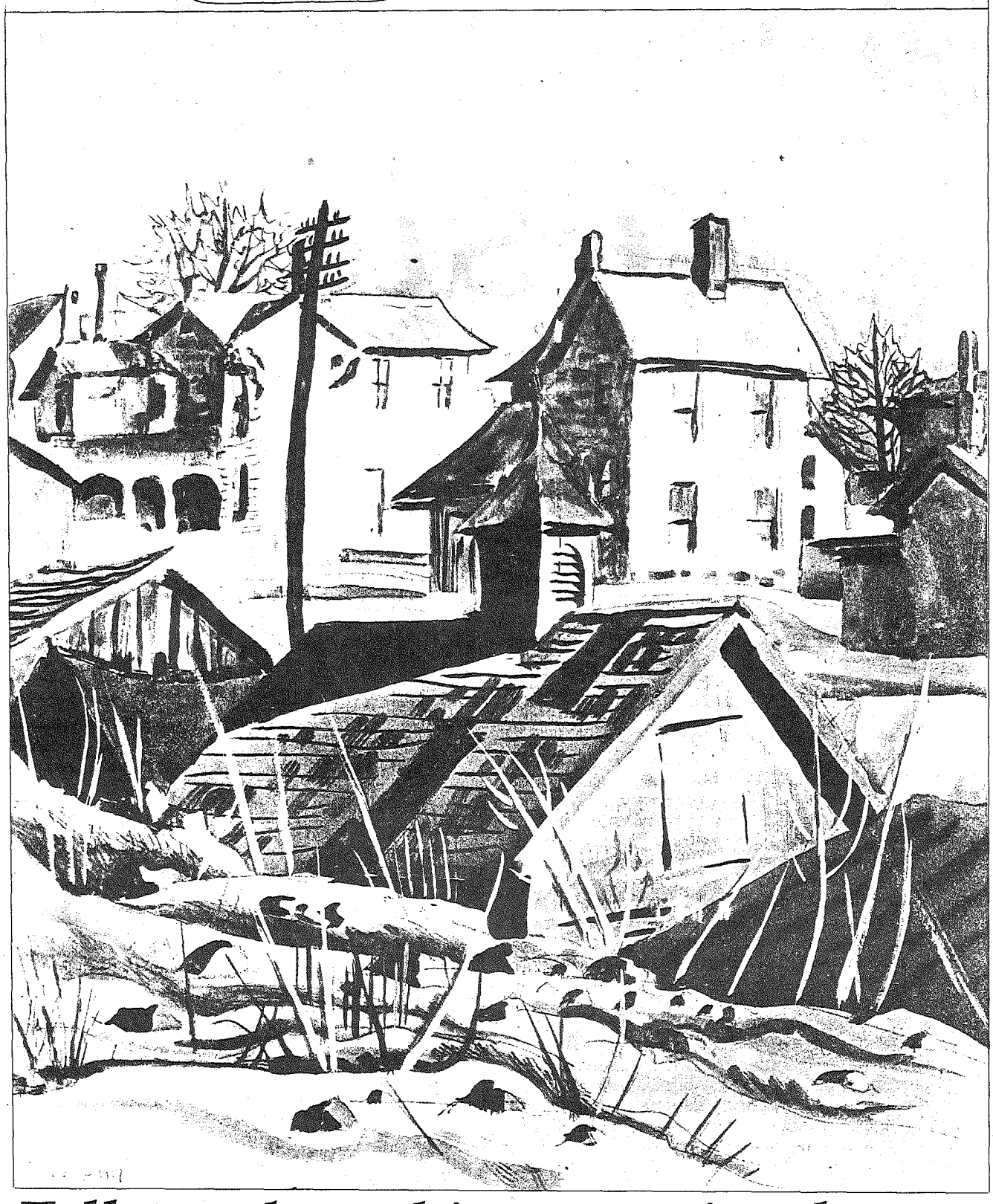
Published weekly, single copy 50 cents, home delivered - per year. All carriers, dealers and distributors are independent contractors free from control, hence, the News is not responsible for advance payments or representatives. Second class postage paid at Salem, Ohio. For change of address: Postmaster, send form 3579 to the Salem News. The Salem News reserves the right to adjust subscription rates during your subscription period upon giving you thirty day notice.



Tell us where this was painted

Identifying this scene should be easy for an area resident who still lives in this neighborhood. Charles Burchfield painted "Houses in Late Autumn Sunlight" in 1917. He was living in Salem at the time. Call us if you can identify it. Burchfield (1893-1967) will be the subject of a major retrospective exhibition at the Columbus Art Museum in 1993. Museum curators are anxious to learn all they can about his paintings and *Yesteryears* readers can help.

Photo courtesy of Salem Historical Society

The bloomer and middy-clad young ladies of the Victorian era are 7 members of Salem High School's 1911 basketball team. They are (from left) Miriam Reese, Olive Kirk, Letha Cole Astry, Mary Silver Brian, Dow and Martha Bonsall. Zora Lingo Kyle, Dorothy

News from 50 years ago in Salem News sports columns

Compiled by Bekkee Panezott

A scheduled China — Steel Workers Organizing Committee game was rained out. Charlie McCloskey knocked out a double for Mullins, while Skip Greenisen singled twice and scored once in three trips to the plate.

Jim Jackson came in from right field in the last half of the eighth to pound out a base hit, go to second on an error, take third on a passed ball, and score on a single by Bill Westfall to break a 3-3 deadlock between the Carrolls and Driscollwood in a Class A game at Centennial Park.

The Salem Polo Club suffered its second straight setback of the season, losing to a fast, bitter-fought contest to the Alliance Riders, 14-12 at Coy Park. The Salem play was sparked by Jim Pidgeon, who scored five goals, and the excellent offensive and defensive play of Tony Sheen.

The Driscollwoods took over the Steel Workers Organizing Committee 5-2. Mike Oana contributed a circuit blow to the SWOC hitting but it wasn't enough and the Driscolls, scoring in the second, fourth and sixth, finished ahead by a three-run margin.

The Fourth of July holiday touched off plenty of fireworks at the Salem Golf Club, with Max Caplan shooting a sparkling par 70 in the first division of the flag tournament and Joe Kelley, who finished on Max's heels, cracking out a sizzling 76, just six over even figures. Finishing third in the first division, Rudy Schuster shot an 80, handicap 7 for a net 73. Dr. R. T. Holzbach and Louis Probst tied for fourth.

The Recreation scored a 2-1 win over the Saxons in a brief Class A game at Centennial Park. The Saxons scored first when Gus Falk hit a triple while leading off in the third and later scored, on a sacrifice bunt by a brother, Julius.

With Dale Anderson holding Hainan's to four safe hits, the NYA softballers pounded out eight resounding drives to score a 10-5 win in a game played at Reilly Field. Jim Armeni connected for a homer for the winners while Whitey King pounded one out for Hainan's.

The Blue Sox will meet the Colored Alliance Dixon post in a doubleheader at Centennial Park. The probable pitchers for the Salem club will be Herman Allison and Buster Wukotich.

Stepping up to the plate in the last of the sixth with two singles already chalked up in as many trips to the plate, "Howdy" Kerr blasted the homer that enabled Driscollwood to eke out a 1-0 shutout of the Sanitary.

Lake Placentia will be out to hang a defeat on the only ball team that has beaten them this year when they play a return engagement with the Cleveland Cardinals. Hurling for Placentia will be either Willis Schopfer of North Georgetown, John Metzger of Notre Dame or Art Maley of Ohio State.

Andy Filp, rounding out a single, a double and a homer in four trips to the plate, led the Recreation to their seventh straight win in the second round of Class A softball.

Walloping the ninth place Electric Furnacers, 11-4, the Recreation entered the home stretch of second round play needing only victories over the Steel Workers Organizing Committee and Mullins to match the latter's undefeated sweep of the first round. Speedball Johnny Zines allowed the Furnacers six hits, all of them singles, as he carved out another victory.

Mines

Continued from page 1

to a maximum of 60 percent because of the pillars. A higher rate of recovery was achieved through a process called "robbing the pillars."

The "longwall method" achieved greater productivity and lower operating costs because all the coal in a seam could be recovered. A series of shields supported the roof and protected the miners. As the cutting moved forward, exposing a new face of coal, the shields were moved forward. The roof behind the shield would then be allowed to collapse harmlessly. Today, this method is used extensively. A massive rotating cutting drum moves in one direction shaving coal from the mine walls. It then reverses itself and moves back over the wall in the opposite direction.

Coal mining has long been recognized as one of the most hazardous of all occupations. Early in this century there were a lot of fatalities in coal mines. In 1907 the death rate was over 3,000 per year. It was not until the 1940s that safety and health conditions for the miners improved significantly.

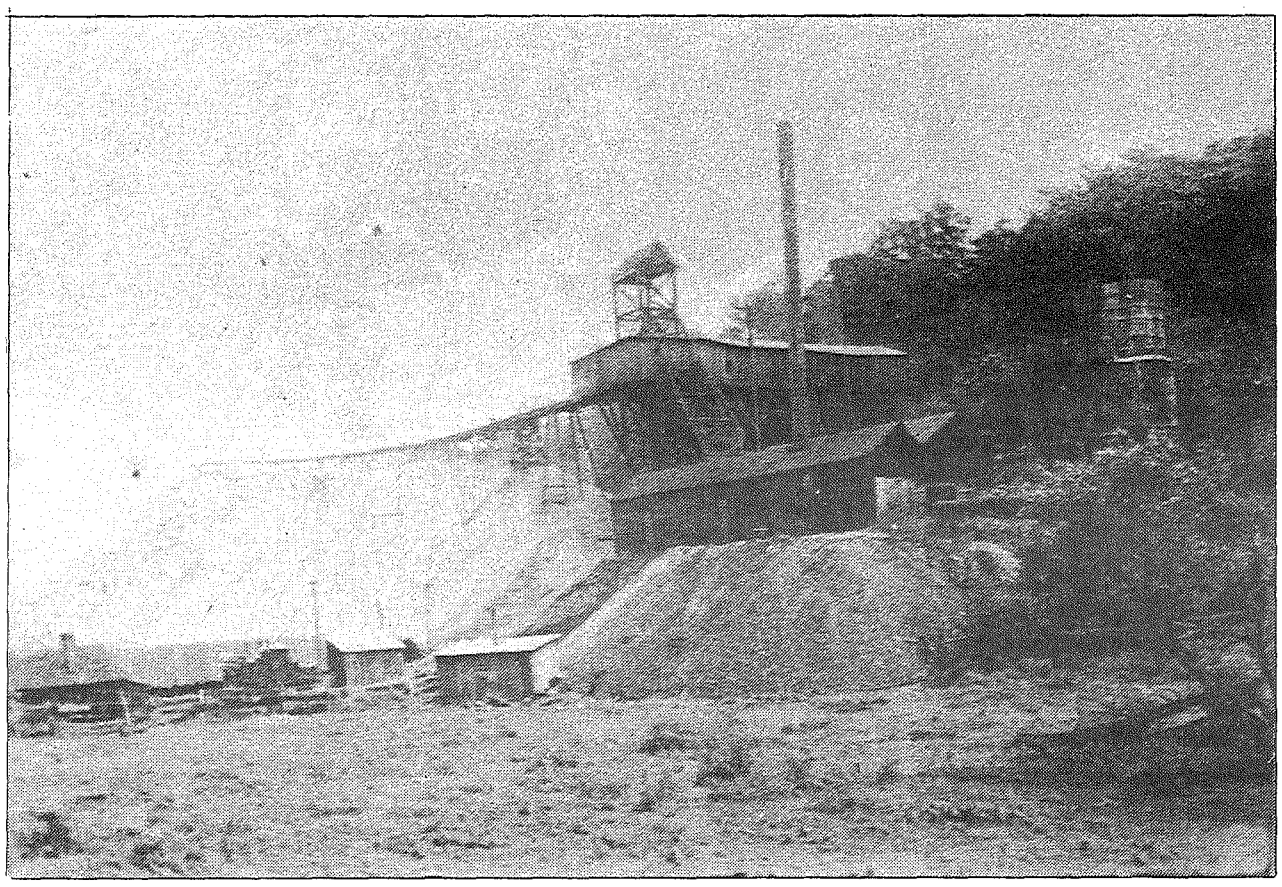
The hazards for coal miners at the turn of the century were many. Gas was a major problem. Broken coal releases several dangerous gases; namely, hydrogen sulphide, carbon dioxide (chokedamp), carbon monoxide (white damp), and methane (firedamp). Air shafts for ventilation were required for release of these gases.

For many years, miners used lights hung on their hats. First used was a teakettle-like vessel containing lard oil and a wick. It was replaced by the carbide light that utilized a mixture of carbide and water. When the flame in front of the miner flickered or went out it indicated bad air. Likewise, rats were left in the mines because when they sensed something wrong was about to happen, they ran. It was a signal of danger for the miners.

A second major hazard was the dust from blasting and loading. Coal dust mixed with air can be explosive, so allowing it to accumulate was dangerous. Unfortunately for many miners, the knowledge of coal dust being explosively hazardous did not become known until after 1900. During the years 1902 through 1918 there were 25 major explosions in coal mines. The dust also caused a lot of victims to suffer from black lung disease.

One of the "high hazard" mines in the area was the Coy Mine located on the north side of Route 165, west of Beaver Creek Road (near Coy Park). It had only 60 feet of cover. Men working that mine remember hearing the sound of the ground moving periodically. Operated by the Coy Coal Co. from 19921 to 1938, this mine had both shaft and drift entrances. Seam thickness was about three feet.

Miners performed about any task that had to be done in a mine — digging, picking, shoveling, drilling, blasting, pushing, building, screening and loading. They even sharpened their own picks and drills. The point of the pick was stuck into a hole in a pot-bellied stove and heated by the hot coals to a flaming red. A ball-peen hammer was used to shape the point on an anvil. When a blue temper line appeared, the pick was doused in water.



Salem Mining Co. once located at bottom of Millville Hill outside Salem. Photo was taken in 1930.

The wage rate for workers mining coal here in 1886 was 85 cents a ton; 51 cents a ton in 1951 because of increased productivity. In contrast, the average yearly income of a union miner today is about $33,000. Work in the small mines was ordinarily a winter-time job, with workers being laid off in April for the summer. Equipment in 1886 consisted of a pick, shovel, hand drill and mule cart. Originally, all mining operations were performed by hand labor.

A wedge-shaped groove a foot or more wide was picked into the face just above the floor. The cutback was as far as could be reached with the pick. In later years, a mechanical cutter resembling a chain saw was used. Blocks of wood called "sprags" (mine posts with caps) were used temporarily to support the overhanging ledge of coal. The coal would then fall by its own weight, or be broken down by pick, wedging or blasting.

"Shooting off the solid" was terminology for loosening coal by blasting. Two long holes, perhaps 6 feet deep, were drilled by hand. Small charges of black powder or ammonia nitrate were then placed in the holes along with a "squib" (fuse). The squib was slow-burning until it shot into the powder. Power drills and machines eventually replaced the blasting.

The introduction of hydraulic nozzles, power-driven drills, dredges and excavators, and endless chain conveyors reduced the amount of back-breaking work required of miners. Today, continuous mining machines remove coal at anywhere from 4 to 15 tons per minute. Some are even controlled by remote.

Prior to the 1930s, coal cars were loaded by hand labor. Miners worked bent over in mines sometimes only four feet high. Coal cars ordinarily held from a half to three tons. The end gates sometimes opened to make shoveling easier. A "sprag" was a stick put through holes in the car's wheels to serve as a brake.

Once the cars were loaded, they had to be taken out of the mines in some way. There was a time when they were pushed along the track by hand. Then horses, mules, ponies, oxen and even dogs were used to pull the cars. Mules were most common, sometimes being kept permanently in the larger mines, seldom seeing the light of day. The Reese Mine, for example, used mules.

In Raymond Zimmerman's pick mine (behind Diamond Auto Wrecking on Route 62), a pony was used. The animal was taken home every night and treated well. His work was to pull six coal cars on level track, but only three when going uphill to the outside.

Various other techniques were used throughout the years to remove cars from the mines. Rope haulage from a central location was one technique. Steam engines did not work well because of insufficient ventilation to remove the smoke and gases. Diesels presented the same problem. By 1888 the electric trolley was in use.

Turn to next page

Mines

Continued from page 4

In the case of the Reese Mine on the Egypt Road, loaded coal cars were pulled up the Painter Road hill by cable. A reel at the top controlled the cable which lay between the tracks.

Once out of the mine the coal had to be screened and graded according to size and ash content. The hand-picking method was used in many of the very old mines. Pickers sorted out lumps having an exceedingly high ash content. They worked alongside a chute, conveyor belt, shaking table or even inside a railroad car. Mechanical methods eventually took over this chore.

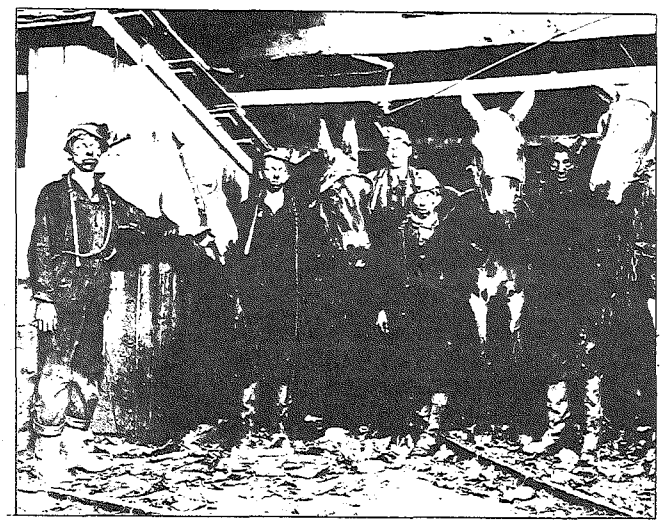
The "tipple" was a high structure, built of oak or steel, in which coal was transported to the top for screening and loading. Its name refers to an apparatus where tipping is done. Coal would be hoisted by either conveyor or in cages, and then dumped for gravity screening through a shaking process into binds. Some tipples, such as those at the Brookwood and Pascola mines, could hold 100 tons of coal. Bars or screens in the tipple would screen coal by size — fine "bug dust," slack, pea or stoker, nut (under 2 inches), egg (2 to 4 inches) and lump (4 inches or larger). The Star Mine delivered all of its bug dust and slack to the old Salem Water Works for use in its boilers.

Many small mines sold "run of mine" coal without screening. Crushing to break down the larger lumps for the mills or power plants took place only in the larger mines. Bands of shale, clay, sulphur, sandstone and limestone were removed. For coke making, the coal had to be crushed moderately fine.

The method of washing coal in the mid-1800s utilized a long trough called a "coal washer." This was an inclined device with a stream of water flowing through it. The stream carried the coal down the trough, removing the clay and dust and allowing the small particles to settle to the bottom. Equipment varied among the mines, depending upon size of operation. Most of the small mines did not wash coal.

McNAB MINE

This shaft mine went from the southwest to the northeast underneath East State Street from the area where Kroger's store once stood. There were two shafts, one in each direction — the Lemmon shaft (behind Hutton's nursing home) and the McNab shaft (corner of Southeast Boulevard and East State Street). Thickness of the coal seam was about 3½ feet. It had a minimum ground cover of 235 feet.



A coal mine in the late 1800s before mining became mechanized and child labor was abolished. Boys and mules provided much of the labor.

During its years of operation from 1901 to 1912, the mine was owned by the McNab Coal Co. (1901-03), Salem Fuel Co. (1904), Salem Coal Co. (1905), Lemmon Coal Co. (1907), B & B Coal Co. (1908-09), and Buck Coal Co. (1910-12). In the early 1900s, offices for McNab, Lemmon and the Salem Co. were located on McKinley Ave. (East State). Sometime during the early years of this century the mine burned.

SHEPHERD MINES

During the years 1888 to 1904, there were at least three Shepherd drift mines being operated by Jesse, Edward, J. C. and Cook Shepherd. One mine operated by the Shepherd Coal Co. was located behind the Robert Hutton residence on Route 62. It had a seam thickness of 3 feet and was abandoned in 1936.

Entrance to Ed Shepherd's mine was east of the Egypt Road, just north of Route 14. A trolley ran west from the entrance across the Egypt Road and part-way up the Millville Hill. The tipple for screening the coal was located there. It was necessary for the trolley motorman to gather speed in order to coast across the Egypt Road and then reattach the trolley pole. A collission with another vehicle occurred there many years ago, with Charlie Parker operating the trolley.

SALEM MINES

The Salem Mining Co. operated mines located off the South Egypt Road, at the bottom of the Millville Hill. There was a shaft on the east side of the Egypt Road, and a drift entrance on the west side. It was in operation from 1892 to 1914 by the Salem Mining Co., Salem Coal Co. and Salem Co.

William Dunn was mine boss when it opened and served as superintendent from 1893 to 1912. the mine had a seam thickness of 3½ feet. Y & O Railroad track went through the shaft area and also provided a spur to the Peerless (Rattlesnake) Mine further east. Coal was loaded and transported at night to Washingtonville where it was transferred to the Erie Railroad.

Offices for the Salem Mining Co. in 1914 were located on West Main Street across from the former Burger Chef. Charles Estep of Windber, Pa. was president and William Watkins mining manager. Mine bosses through the years were Avery Washington, Thomas McCullum, R. J. Borden, Harry Holland and J. E. Morget.

Records show that during the years from 1874 to 1891 a Salem mine existed in the vicinity of the railroad stations on Depot Street (South Ellsworth Avenue). It was a shaft mine operated by the Salem Coal & Iron Company. Thomas R. Lewis was superintendent. It had a seam thickness of 3½ feet but filled with water in 1891.

PASCOLA OR GREENAMYER MINE

This shaft mine, opening halfway down the southside of the Millville Hill, went southwest behind Heck's Store toward Southeast Boulevard. Operated by the New Salem Coal Company and Howells & Ashman, it was one of the larger mines in the area. Two of the superintendents were John Howells and Jim Ashman. The mine opened in 1889 and was abandoned in 1940. At the time of the closing, there were eight miners and two dayhands working in the mine.

John Howells, the first owner, dug a single shaft 108 feet deep. It took 108 days. Pascola then dug a second shaft to accomodate two cages. Mules were used and stabled inside the mine. Boilers provided steam to generate electricity for the trolley motors.

BROOKWOOD MINE

One of the area's largest drift mines was located east off Route 62 in line with the by-pass. It connected with the Pine Hollow Mine. Cardinal Development and a skating rink (site of the tipple) were once located in the area, known as the Brooks Estate.

A trolley was used to haul the coal from the mine to the tipple's conveyor. There were two large natural gas engines to generate electricity. Operated last by the Callahan Mining Company

Turn to next page

Mines

Continued from page 5

(Homer Callahan), the mine has been owned previously by John Howells. Seam thickness was only 2½ feet. It closed in 1947.

REED MINE

This pick mine was actually two drift mines together with two openings. They were located one-quarter mile north of Reed Hill on the Pine Lake Road, with a long entrance from Route 165. Seam thickness was 3½ feet. Owned by the J. F. Reed Coal Company, the mines were operated by Foster Reed and Joe Yeager. An old family photo shows Tressie Reed in one of the mine's coal cars. Abandonment took place soon after World War II.

REDINGER MINE

B. C. Englert and Son operated this drift mine. It was located on the old Daisy Grounds off Route 62, between Pine Lake Road and New Albany. The mine was abandoned in 1923.

SILVER CREEK

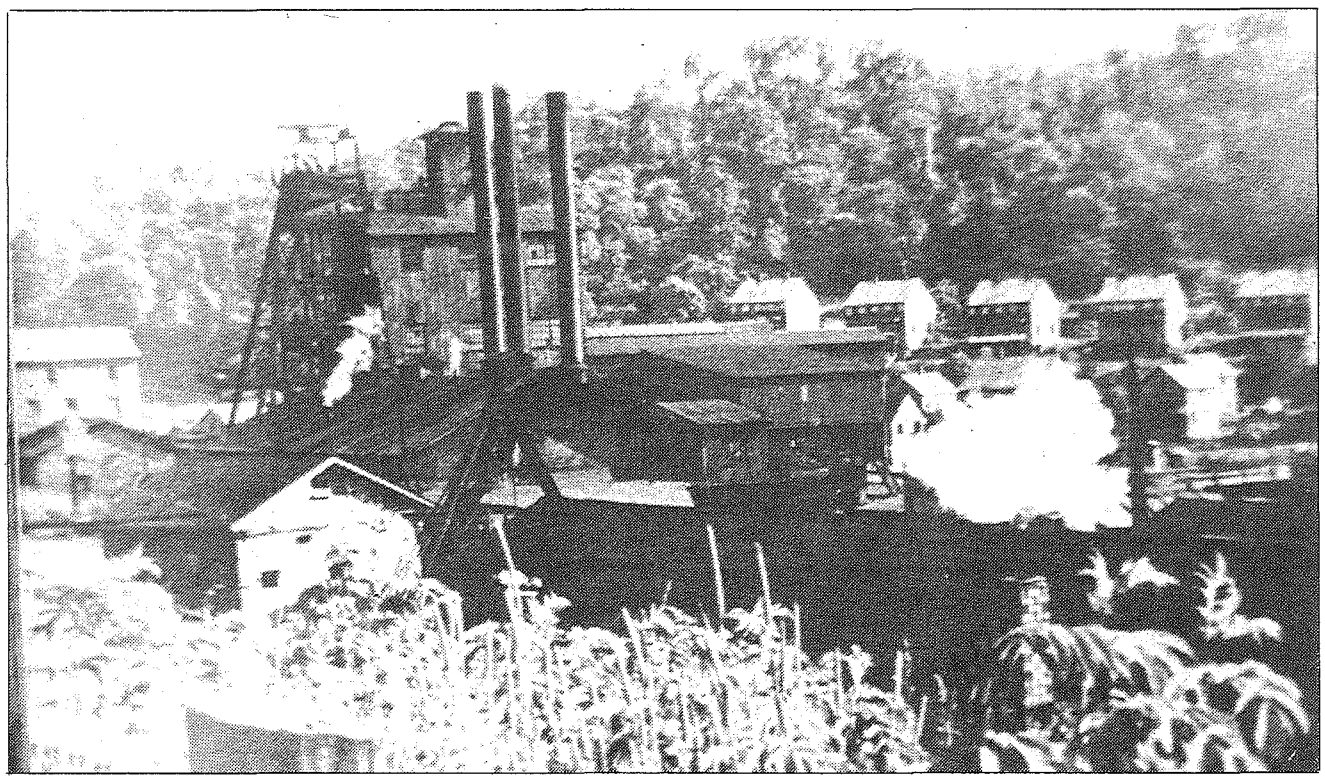
This was a shaft mine located three-quarters of a mile south of Route 165 on Beaver Creek Road. The name came from a stream called Silver Creek that wound its way through the property. Seam thickness was about two feet. Operated by the Miller Brothers Coal Company, it was abandoned in 1944.

HOLROYD MINE

Sampson Holroyd operated this small drift mine until 1919. It was located south of New Albany on the west side of the Egypt Road.

GREEN MOUNTAIN OR WETZEL MINE

Wetzel & Brown operated this mine, which was located on land owned by Bill Wetzel. It was a drift mine, with two entrances, located halfway between New Albany and Greenford (one mile west of Beaver Creek Road on the south side). Seam thickness was less than 2½ feet. The mine was abandoned in 1940.



The Salem Mining Co. facility looking west in 1915. The row of houses line the roadway near the South Egypt Road. Only two houses remain standing today.

MILLVILLE MINE

Located one-quarter mile north of Route 14 on Beaver Creek Road, this drift mine was operated by the Millville Coal Company. It was abandoned in 1928.

STAR MINE

Letha Astry and Louis Pressacco owned and operated this drift mine, located on the Butcher Road near the Lisbon-Canfield Road. An electric trolley, built low to the ground, was used to haul ten loaded one-ton coal cars at a time from the mine. A conveyor then moved the coal to the top of the oak tipple.

Roooms in the mine were about seven feet wide, with track branching off into the many rooms. Ventilation came from an air shaft and fans. Wilbert Pressacco, son of the operator, remembers inside temperatures of the mine being 60 degrees in the winter and comfortably cool in the summer. He cut, drilled and shot the coal using powder and squids (fuses) from the Salem Tool Company. Two men were killed in the mine, which closed shortly after World War II.

The list of other mines once existing in our area is a very long one, indeed. Each has a history, but only the names and locations of some of them can be given here. They include Lemmon and Peerless (Millville Hill), Daugherty (a pick mine at Route 62 and 165), Trotter, Goddard, Shriver, Reese and Ashman (Egypt Road), Mead (Route 165), and Dinsmore, Bush and Englert.

Mining tools, equipment and other artifacts representing the coal mining industry in our area have been collected and restored for display in the Salem Historical Museum's "Freedom Hall." Roland Smith completely rebuilt an old coal car for display on track removed from a local coal mine.

Maps, charts, photographs and other memorabilia related to mining are available for viewing by visitors to the museum. Considerable help was given by Robert J. Lippiatt, Ann Harris, Woodrow Dennis, Dorothy Conkle and Wilbert Pressacco. The display is the museum's attempt to record and preserve historical information about the working lives of coal miners who played such an important part in our area's past.

Kids learn about their hometown from book, tours

The cross incised into the wood over the front door of early homes — the door beneath symbolized the Bible — was a sure sign to other Quakers that a brother lived inside.

Youngsters in Salem schools have learned that and a lot more about their hometown through a professionally written and illustrated history book, "My Community Salem, Ohio" written and edited in 1979 by five teachers at Buckeye School, Doris Eldridge, Jo Ann Harvith, Marguerite Miller, Ila Jean Paxson and Lois Votaw. The 53-page book, revised in 1988, was published through a grant from the Salem Community Foundation.

Studies begin in the third grade classrooms at Reilly School where Mrs. Miller is now the principal. Ms. Harvith is on the staff there and one of the third grade teachers eager to instill an interest in the town's history — the others are Lynne Jackson, Kim Lewis and Marge Ziegler. "The kids tell me they've gone to Williamsburg to find out about history only to learn there's everything here and more," she says.

As they view some of the city's historic homes along South Lincoln Avenue firsthand, points of architecture and furnishings intrigue them, like the "good morning" staircases which begin at opposite sides of the upper floor and meet at the bottom. Or the claw footed bathtubs and the "thrones" with a flushing apparatus reaching to the ceiling. But they're most interested in the hidden rooms which secreted runaway slaves — Salem was a stopover on the Underground Railway which stetched across Ohio.

This year, youngsters toured the old neighborhoods after they viewed a slide presentation by Joann Shoop and Helen Labbe. Then Margaret Starbuck invited them to the Quaker Meeting House where she showed them memorabilia and demonstrated the wheel which moves the wall which was once used to separate the sexes during meetings.

Here are a few of the reactions of Ms. Harvith's third graders:

"I thought the eaves and gingerbread trim on the outside of some of the houses were neat." — Angela Shasteen.

"The chandeliers looked expensive. They would probably cost a lot of money today." — Brandon Hill.

"It was real interesting how they made hiding places and hid the slaves." — Cliff Duris.

"South Lincoln is a nice street. It's neat and fun. I like living in my house, because it has secret passages." — Ben Caldwell.

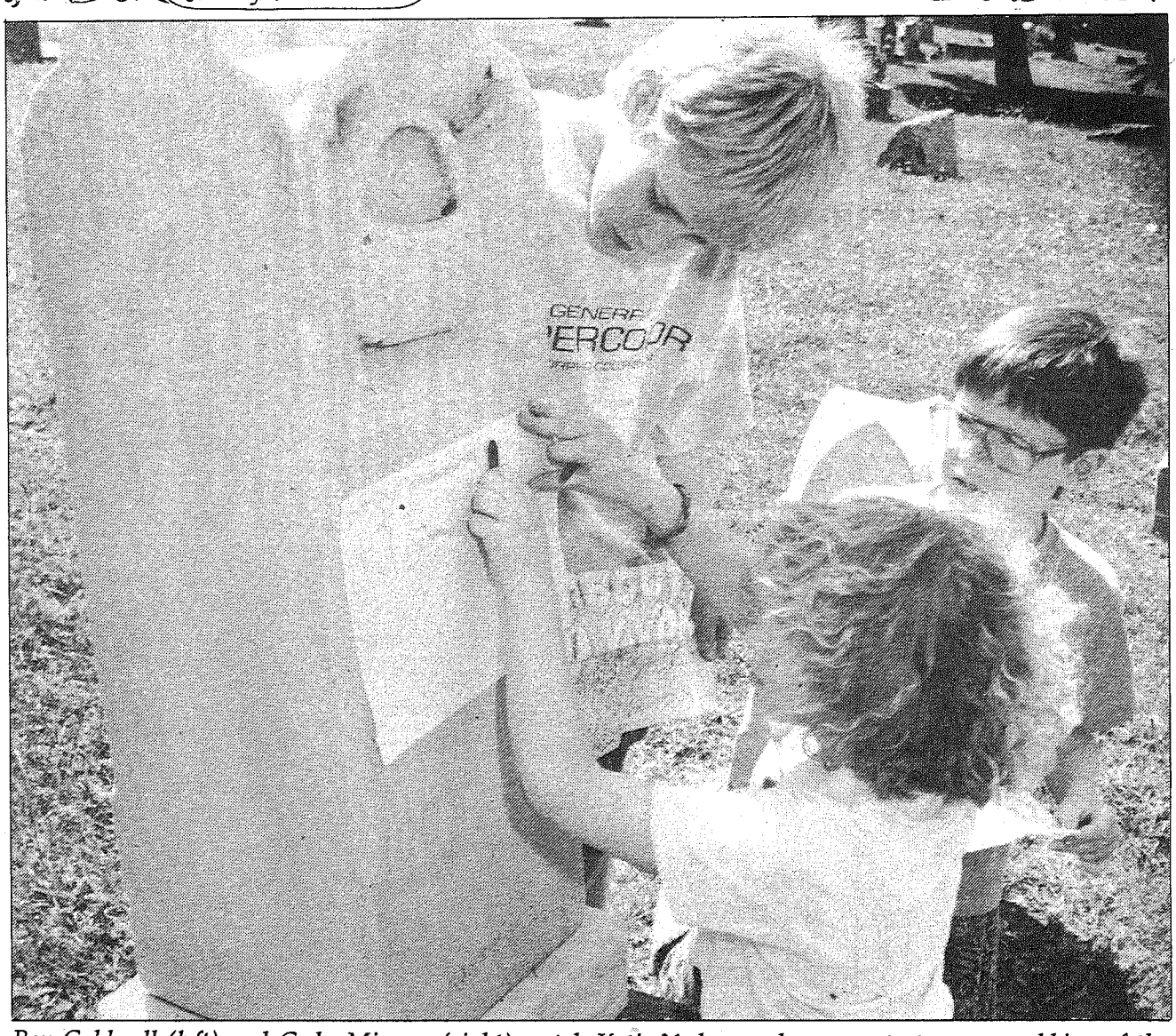
"The homes looked cleaner than I thought they would, even though they're old." — Jeremy Forsythe.

"It was interesting to see the way houses have changed and the designs have become more modern." — Erin Johnson.

Promoting the study and interest of children in the state's history is a dream that is being realized by a series of groups — the Ohio Historical Society, the Ohio Academy of History, the Ohio Council for the Social Studies and the Ohio Association for Historical Societies and Museums. After extensive preparation, these organizations have published the *Ohio History Resource Guide for Teachers.*

Divided into three parts, the guide includes a set of interviews with history educators about current issues that affect the teaching and learning of Ohio history.

To obtain a copy, priced at $8.50 plus $1.50 for shipping, people can send a check to OAHSM, the Ohio Historical Society, 1982 Velma Ave., Columbus OH 43211-2497 or call (614)297-2340.



Ben Caldwell (left) and Cody Mingus (right) watch Katie Yoder as she concentrates on a rubbing of the gravestone marker of Strotter Brown, a black basket maker who lived in Salem in the late 1800s. The children were members of Jo Ann Harvith's third grade class at Reilly School. Brown's grave is at the Hope Cemetery.

Hanover physician had hidden secret

By Lois Firestone

BUNDLED UP IN A fur lap robe, a steaming foot warmer underneath his feet, the doctor dozed off, snatching a few brief moments of sleep between house calls to families stricken with the dreaded typhoid fever sweeping the area.

For six weeks, James Robertson had managed only a few hours of rest, guiding his sleigh along isolated country lanes to attend families stricken with the malignant sickness. The disease had spread slowly at first, then escalated to epidemic proportions among the inhabitants of the sparse settlements around Hanover before it subsided.

The physician's dedication was well known to his patients, many of whom had gone to him for help since he'd settled in Hanover in 1823 when he was 23 years old, and opened an office in his home along 10181 Plymouth St.

Robertson was 13 when his father, Presbyterian minister James Robertson migrated with his family to Columbiana County from Preshire, Scotland in 1813. Eight years later, the family all in to help fellow settlers put up the log building to house the Bethesda Presbyterian Church which the elder Robertson founded along with Rev. Clement Vallandigham. In 1830, he formed the Hanover Presbyterian Church and was the first minister to that congregation, too.

For 16 years he pastored the Hanover church, but the slavery issue eventually divided the parishioners. In 1846 Robertson left the church to organize the Hanover Free Presbyterians and four years later, he became the minister of the Free Presbyterian Church near Salineville.

Young James mirrored his father's beliefs in equality for the blacks — in time, the whole family would be active in helping the plight of the slaves.

The younger Robertson studied medicine at the Jefferson Medical College in Pennsylvania, and interned with Dr. Horace Potter at New Lisbon. He was 27 when he married a Lisbon girl, 21-year-old Anna Eliza Scott, the only child of David Scott. They had seven children, Katherine, Strowan, Lucretia, Fergus, Flora, Janet and Oscar.

Their Plymouth Street home was open to visiting clergy and informally known in the community as the Presbyterian Ministers Hotel. Both became active in temperance reform.

But it was the slavery issue which united many of the people living along Plymouth Street and the outlying areas; the village was a main artery in the underground movement which conveyed fleeing southern slaves to Canada.

The Robertson home was a layover stop. Frightened men, women and children, often evading their masters or bounty hunters by only minutes, moved through Ohio villages and cities hidden in wagons or walking on foot at night. At the Robertsons, the runaways were taken to a concealed hideaway in the basement, a crawl space, where they were fed a meal and given a few hours' rest before continuing north. The room was connected to an underground tunnel leading to another directly across the street at the house of George Sloan.

James' sister Jessie lived there in an impressive brick home built by her husband, George, who ran a thriving water-powered mill along Sandy Creek. Sloan, an elder in the Hanover Presbyterian Church, lost hundreds of dollars in land speculation deals when the Sandy and Beaver Canal shut down — he laid out the town of East Rochester and platted Dungannon which he named in honor of his birthplace in Ireland.

As the Robertson family grew, the home became increasingly cramped and in 1839 James built on an addition which extended from the basement kitchen to the second floor. On the ground floor he put in a library and consultation rooms; upstairs was one large room with windows facing Howard Street, another secret room, but this one was not used for slaves.

Although the entries into and out of the downstairs rooms were like any other house, the second floor room was shut off from the rest of the home with several thicknesses of brick.

From the outside the room looked to be part of the house. But the sparsely furnished chamber could be entered only through an outside window.

Neighbors puzzled over the activity in that room — flickering lamplight glowed from the curtained windows late at night and on into the early morning. For years, the strange goings on in the hidden room were whispered about in the village although no one knew for certain what was happening inside because neither the doctor nor his wife talked about it.

Then the story leaked out, possibly through one of the doctor's suppliers. Although cadavers had been routinely dissected in medical schools for decades as part of a physician's training, performing autopsies privately was illegal in the United States.

But that was what Robertson was doing in a makeshift laboratory he set up in the room. The bodies were supplied, the story circulated, for a price, by grave robbers who delivered their cargo late at night. How were they brought in, or for that matter, how did the doctor get in and out of the room? That was never revealed, but people speculate that a ladder was placed at one of the windows during the night and hidden by day.

Although the Robertsons' connection with the underground railroad was well known, neither James nor Anna Robertson ever told anyone that the room existed. That would be for later generations of Hanover villagers to figure out and wonder over.

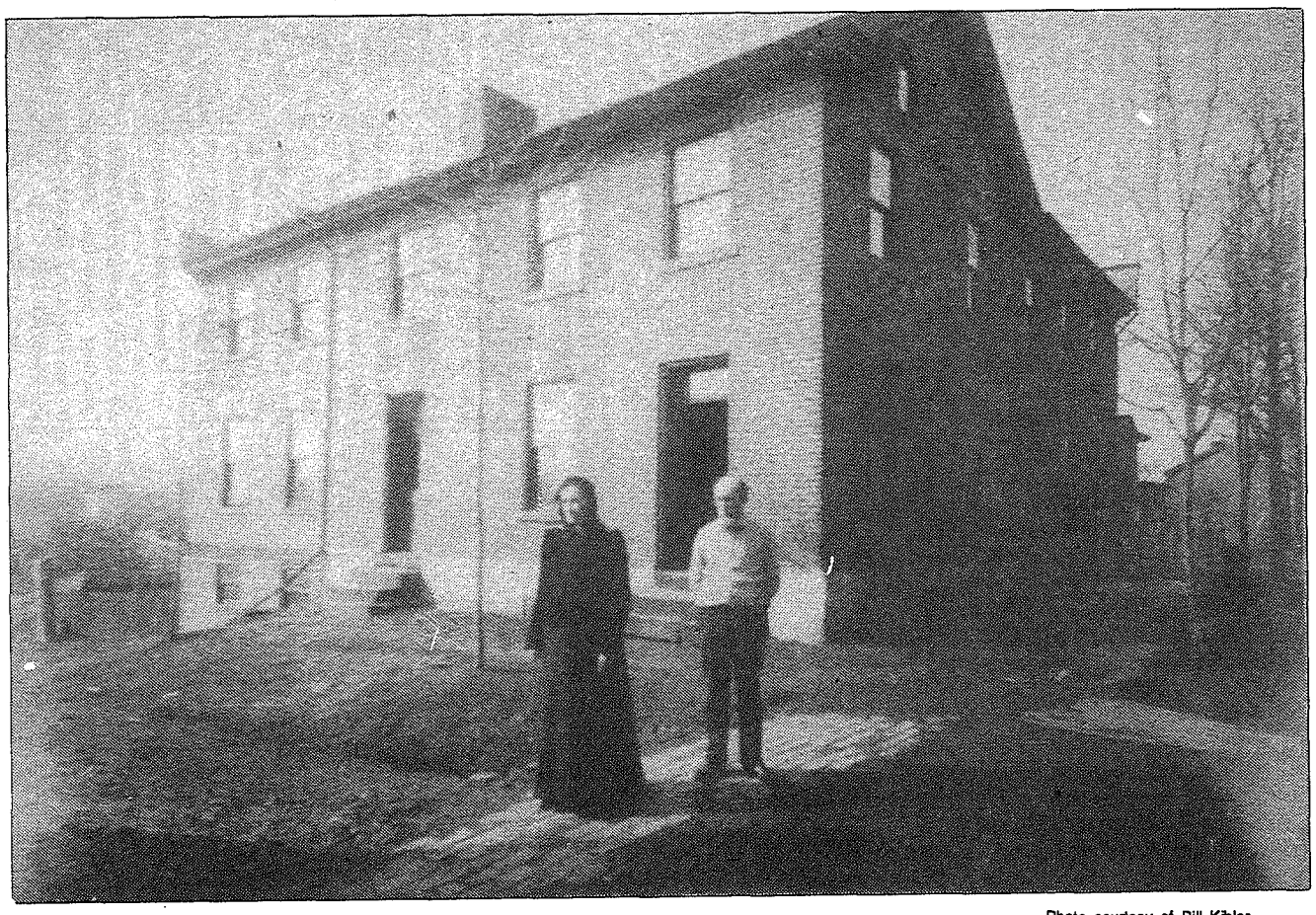


Photo courtesy of Bill Kibler

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Schooley stand outside the 1860s home of Dr. James Robertson at the corner of Plymouth and Howard Streets in Hanoverton. The hidden room is behind the two windows at the left on the second floor of the home, owned today by Gertrude and Charles Snyder.

Robertson home still stands today

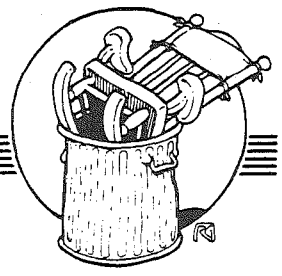
The Robertson house stands today with the bricked-in room still intact, although it hasn't been used in decades, possibly since James Robertson passed away in 1868.

Gertrude and Charles Snyder have lived in the airy, high-ceiling-roomed Plymouth Street house for 45 years. Their children, Charles, Margaret Morrow, Martha Clark and Ann Thompson enjoyed their childhoods in the spacious rooms.

The Snyders' grandson lived in the Arter house for a time and found the hidden tunnel which runs under the street. The crawl space in the Snyder basement is beneath their dining room on the ground floor.

The hidden room upstairs remains unreachable, enclosed by brick walls on four sides. "We knew it was there," Gertrude Snyder remembers. "When I was younger in my teens and the house was empty, we tried to find it. We tapped on the walls, but couldn't find the room."

ANTIQUE OR JUNQUE



lamp painting done in reverse

By James G. McCollam
Copley News Service

Q. This lamp is marked "Jefferson" and is on a very heavy base. It looks like a seashore scene.

A New York dealer offered me $700 for it, but I think I should get more.

What do you think?

A. This reverse painted lamp was made by the Jefferson Co. in Chicago about 1920.

A dealer would probably sell this for about $1,200; he would be willing to pay $600 to $700; dealers are in business to make a profit.

Q. The attached mark is on the bottom of an antique plate with a rural scene in blue on white. It is 9 inches in diameter and in very good condition.

Can you tell me anything about its vintage and value?

A. This mark was used by Minton & Hollings in Stoke, England, during the 1850s. The company was subsequently called just "Mintons."

Your plate would possibly sell for $75 to $85.

Q. What can you tell me about a two-handled chamber pot with some weird decoration?

It has a frog on the inner side of the pot and a leering face in the bottom. It is also decorated with pink luster.

A. Your bawdy potty was probably made by Dixon, Austin & Co. in Sunderland, England, about 1850. These are extremely popular with collectors and frequently sell for over $500.

Q. Please provide some information about my Royal Dux figurine about a peasant man and woman.

The mark is an acorn in a triangle. The height is about 22 inches.

A. This porcelain piece was made in a factory founded by E. Eichler in Dux, Bohemia, in 1860.

The mark you describe was used until 1900. The value would probably be in $500 to $600 range.

Q. I would like to know what you can tell me about a Royal Doulton Character Jug depicting Mae West. It is numbered D-6688.

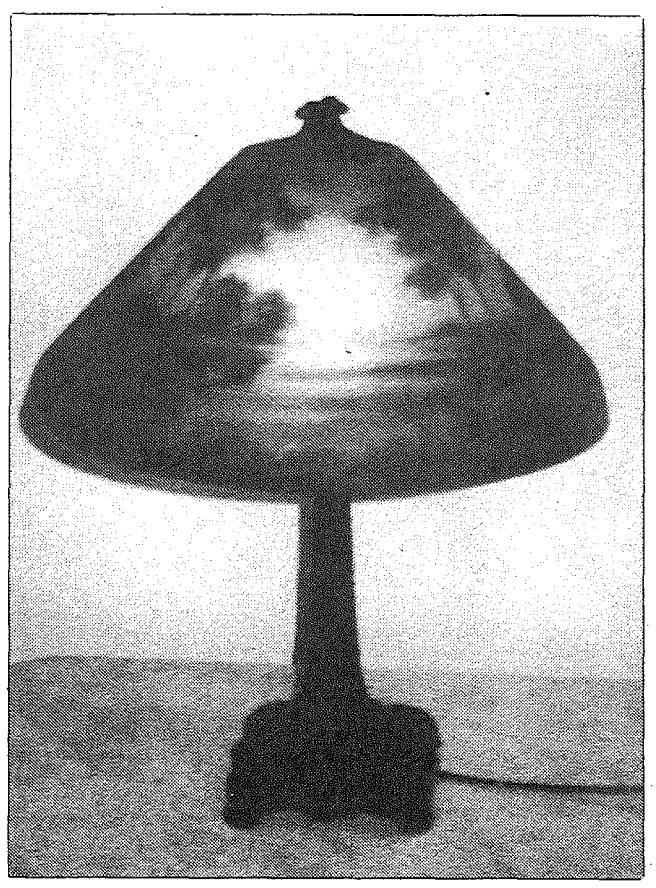
A. This Mae West jug was issued in 1983 and withdrawn in 1985. It is currently selling in the $100 to $125 range.

Q. While cleaning out the attic we found an old tin sign with the picture of an Indian.

It appears to be an advertisement for Non Such Mince Meat. The sign measures 28 by 20 inches. Is this very valuable?

A. The sign you describe was issued in 1890 and depicts an Onandaga Indian chief.

In really good condition it would probably sell for at least $2,000.



This reverse painted lamp was made by Jefferson Co. of Chicago about 1920.

Send your questions about antiques with picture(s), a detailed description, a stamped, self-addressed envelope and $1 per item to James G. McCollam, P.O. Box 1087, Notre Dame, IN. 46556. All questions will be answered but published pictures cannot be returned.

McCollam is a member of the Antique Appraisers Association of America.

Sidewalk laying in Greenford in 1900s

Photo courtesy of Gordon Calvin

In this 1900s scene in the village of Greenford, workers pour the cement for a sidewalk which runs from the town square to the Greenford Lutheran Church. The roadway to the left is unpaved.

Art sleuths solve two more mysteries

By Dick Wootten

Two sharp-eyed area residents with good memories have solved two more Burchfield mysteries. Photos of the paintings were in last week's *Yesteryears*.

Charles Beck of Greenford came through with an identification of the site of the painting entitled "Evening," which we know was painted May 22, 1919. Beck was one of our readers who had identified the painting entitled "Building with Domed Top," which was in the June 8 edition. That building was a brick kiln in the old New Albany brick yard that was torn down in the 1920s.

Beck called us to say that "Evening" depicted another New Albany scene. If you go north from Salem on Route 62 and turn right (east) on Route 165 and travel maybe 200 yards to the bottom of the hill you can see the scene on the right (looking south). Beck said the house on the left was for many years the home of Barney Smith, a well-known area woodcarver. He died several years ago at the age of 101.

The house in the midde, he said, is now owned by Al Drummond but back when Burchfield painted the scene, it was the home of Bill House. He said the home on the right is now owned by Terry Morris, and was formerly owned by Oscar Toot.

Salem News Photograph Aleks Dolzenko and I went out to check out the scene. We think Burchfield must have painted from a field north of the houses. It's now a corn field. The stone wall in the foreground is now gone but a fence is there. It's likely the the row of small trees were locust trees. Several old ones remain.

Although trees now hides much the the houses, the roof lines are the same as the ones in the painting. Burchfield painted a number of scenes in New Albany.

Betti Lee Lewis of Lisbon also called about the painting. It reminded her of the area of Highland Avenue and 10th Street in Salem. She remembers riding horseback in fields in that area years ago. It's now all residential.

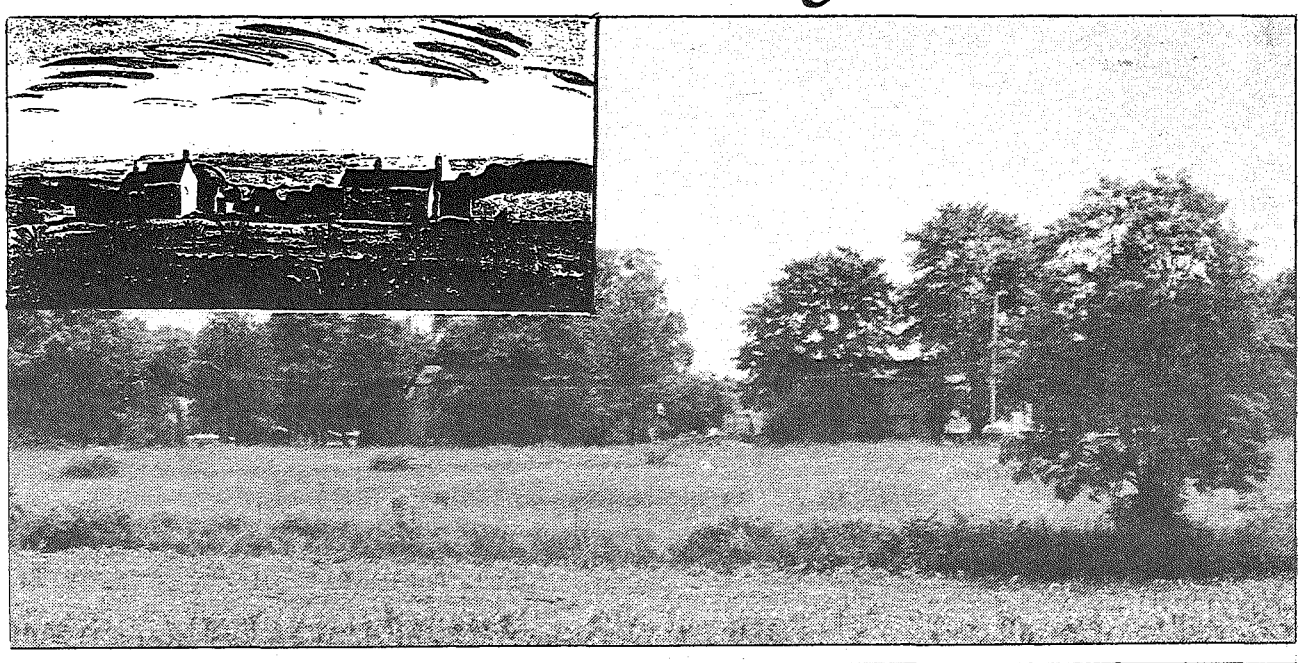
Edward Lesch of Salem called to identify "Snow Patterns," an industrial scene painted in 1920. Lesch said the long building is the Bliss plant in Salem and the building in front if it was the Bliss office building, which for a period served as school building for Kent State-Salem branch. That building was razed two years ago.

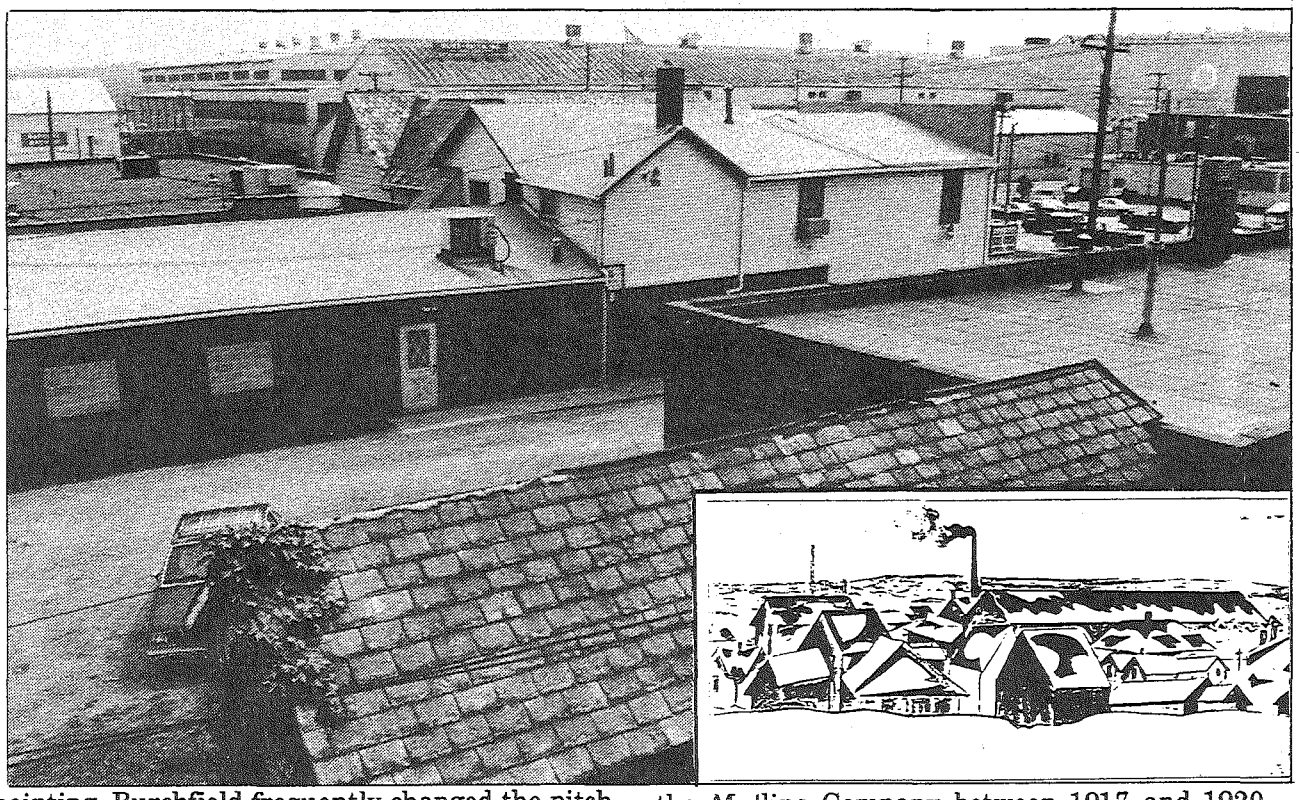
Lesch, who is 76, worked at Bliss for 36 years. "I remember that smoke stack in the middle of the painting. They had to fire it up to get heat for the machine shop. I recognized the picture right off the bat," he said.

Bob Lieder of Salem called with the theory that the painting was done from the upstairs level of a house, possibly on Perry Street or Euclid Street. He thought the long building may have been the Deming plant. Lieder came to the News office and exammined a 1940 aerial photo of Salem in our editor's office and then changed his mind.

"The dormers on the roof of the old Bliss office building cinches it," he said.

Aleks and I tried to find Burchfield's vantage point. We think Burchfield may have painted the scene (or sketched it) from the second floor window of a barn behind Fernengel's Tavern at 496 South Broadway. Ralph Firestone of Firestone Electric was kind enough to provide a truck with a cherry picker. Aleks go in it and tried shooting the scene from an elevation that matched the barn window. A parked car was in the way and prevented us from getting the exact same angle. It's possible that the old shed with the slate roof in the foreground of the photo was the small building in the middle of the foreground of the painting. Burchfield frequently changed the pitch of roofs and compressed structures to create a more unified painting.





Here's another clue. It's in a map, drawn by Burchfield himself in the 1950s for his biographer, John Baur, who was then director of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

Burchfield drew a dotted line on the map showing the route he took on the way to work at the Mullins Company between 1917 and 1920. "Many watercolors were made from notes gathered on these daily walks (2 round trips a day)," he wrote.

The dotted line goes down "Foundry Hill," which is now the embankment below the Sparkle Market parking lot. Fernengel's barn is just below that hill.

New Dale Shaffer book is filled with rare old postcards, historical stories

For a limited time readers will have the chance to own a collection of old postcard scenes of the area — Dale E. Shaffer, in his new book, *Salem Remembered — A Picture Scrapbook*, has reproduced a selected group of 71 rare picture postcards. These old photographs are now collectors' items.

His 234-page book contains a total of 144 photographs and illustrations.

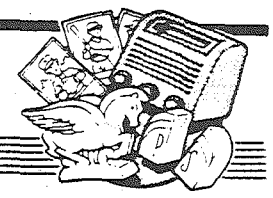
In addition to the pictures, there are 64 articles covering a wide variety of subjects ranging from the early Quakers to the Civil War, from the original platting of Salem to the building and dedication of Fourth Street School.

News flashbacks from the mid-1800s are presented along with much historical and factual information about the Salem area.

The reader is taken back to April 10, 1865 when the people of Salem celebrated the fall of Richmond; to speeches by abolitionists at the Old Town Hall; to the building of the Gurney block in 1871; to the opening of the Grand Opera House in 1890; to the years of the electric trolley. Articles tell about pioneer life in early America with descriptions of them on display at the Salem Historical Museum.

Only 500 copies of this limited paperback edition have been published. It's available for $15 at Cheshire Booksellers and Fenske's News in Salem or by calling the author at (216)337-3348.

CONTEMPORARY COLLECTIBLES



Cigarette case was mark of elegance

By Linda Rosenkrantz
Copley News Service

In the '30s and '40s, they were one of the ultimate emblems of elegance. They were Fred Astaire, William Powell, Cole Porter. Together with the cigarette holder and the sterling silver lighter, the cigarette case was the very personification of the Smart Set.

Now that smoking has come to represent the opposite of elegance and sophistication, all smoking paraphernalia — pipes, cigar cutters, labels and boxes, roly-poly and other tobacco tins et al, not to mention cigarette cards and boxes — is collectible, perhaps to remind us of that earlier, more pleasurable, association.

The cigarette case evolved from the cigar case, which was, necessarily, a larger and bulkier object. But with the feminization of smoking and the proliferation of cigarettes came something sleeker and more decorative.

Metallic cases of silver, silver plate, platinum, gold and gold plate, as well as chromium-finished examples with art deco designs, were among the most popular. Other materials included tortoiseshell, enameled metal and cloisonne.

At first the most popular color scheme was black and white, but this was followed by an anything-goes eruption of mono- and duo-tones, including jewel tones (sapphire, emerald, ruby) and pearlized finishes.

There was a great variety of shapes, forms and gimmicks as well. Most standard cases were made to accommodate either 10 or 20 cigarettes, although there were some that, for some reason, held 13. There were square ones and rectangles and envelopes with foldover tops that snapped shut. Some were personalized with names or monograms, others encrusted with jewels — genuine or bogus.

Many collectors today focus on multifunctional cases, such as cigarette case/compact combos (complete with mirror, rouge and powder), manufactured by Ronson, Evans, Richard Hudnut, Volupte and Elgin American, and cigarette cases with lighters attached. Most of the latter had the striking mechanism mounted on top of the case which opened on one side. Among the makers of these combinations were Ronson, Evans and Pickwick.

In the period just preceding World War II, cases with engine-turned designs and gold-bronze finishes were best sellers.

For the male contingent, there were steerhide-covered cases, lightweight objects made of "aeroplane metal," others of simulated wood grain and a few actually made of real wood.

And there were gimmicks galore. There were, for example, the pop-up models, in which the smoker slid back a narrow top, and, activated by a spring, up popped a ciggie. Some models boasted corner finger holes, permitting the end to be flipped open, others opened automatically when the top and bottom were both pressed, while in still others one cigarette would automatically rise to attention when the case was opened.

And then there was "Flippy," a Lucite case bearing the image of a pre-Victoria's Secret-clad miss who did a strip tease when the case was opened. These bore such captions as "Caught in the Draft" and "The Girl He Left Behind."

The Age of Elegance was over.

Linda Rosenkrantz edited *Auction* magazine and authored five books, including "Auction Antiques Annual." Write Collect, c/o Copley News Service, PO Box 190, San Diego, CA 92112-0190.

Collector finds series of photos of area family

Tom Molecea of Boardman is a graduate student at Youngstown State University but an avid collector of old photographs, and recently discovered these pictures of people who lived in the area in the 1900s.

George Donges was a tailor who learned his craft in Columbiana and worked there until he was 48 when he and his wife, Louisa moved the family to a property one mile east of Damascus.

Donges passed away in 1916 at the age of 68 and his wife Louisa followed seven years later when she was 74. They are buried in the Columbiana Cemetery.

The Donges had four children, Leone, Lyman, Marge and Charley. Leone married a Salem boy, Robert Crew, who as a youth delivered ice cream and baked goods for the Lease brothers. Later, the couple moved to Canton.

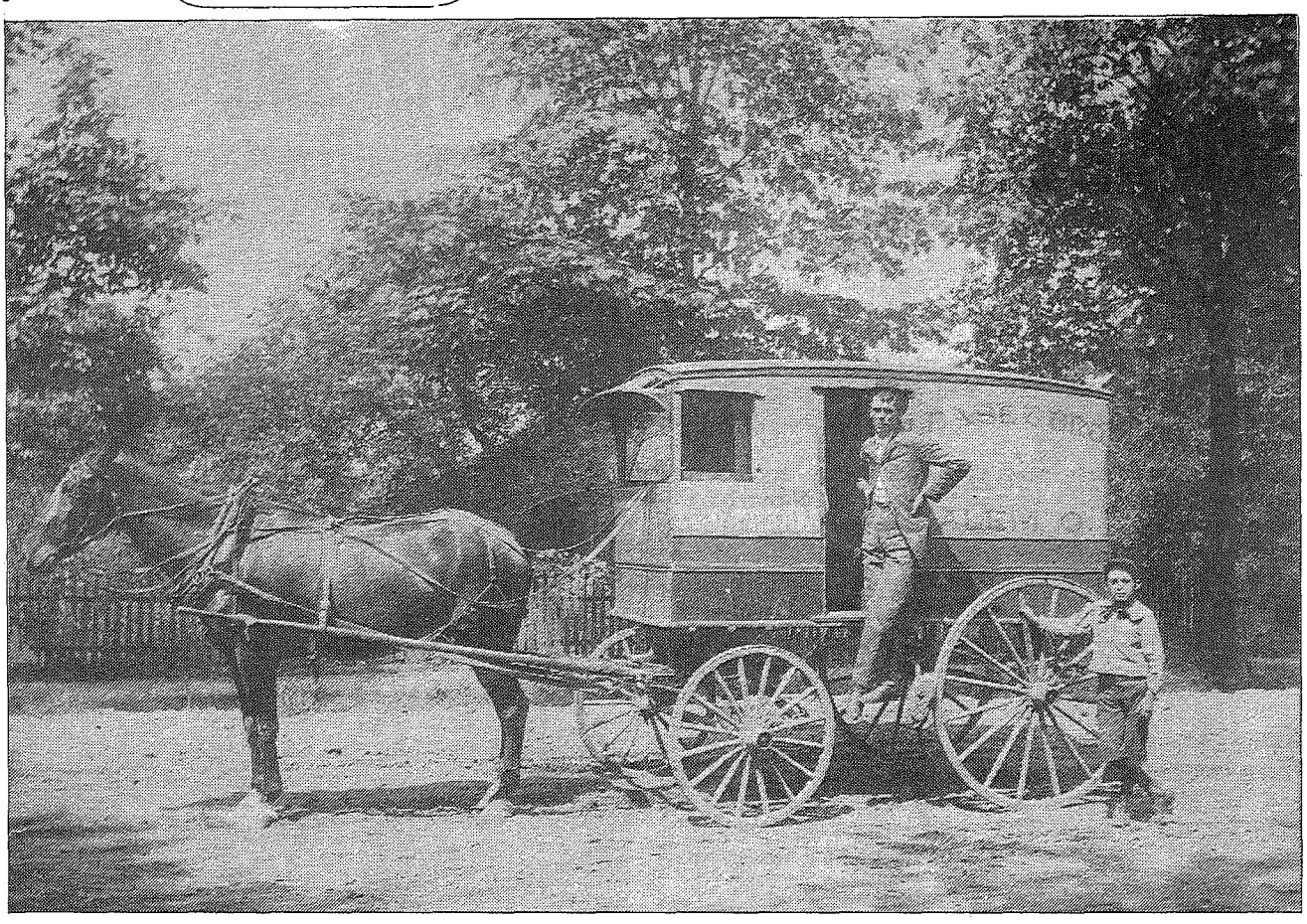
Among the photographs Tom found were both Leone and Robert as infants and Leone as a young girl. All the subjects were identified on the back of the pictures which is how Molecea pieced the story together.

But he learned the basic facts about the Donges family from genealogist Carol Willsey Bell of Youngstown who unearthed George Donges obituary in the Monday, May 22 issue of the *Buckeye State* of Lisbon and looked up the records of the Columbiana Cemetery (volume 1, page 36).

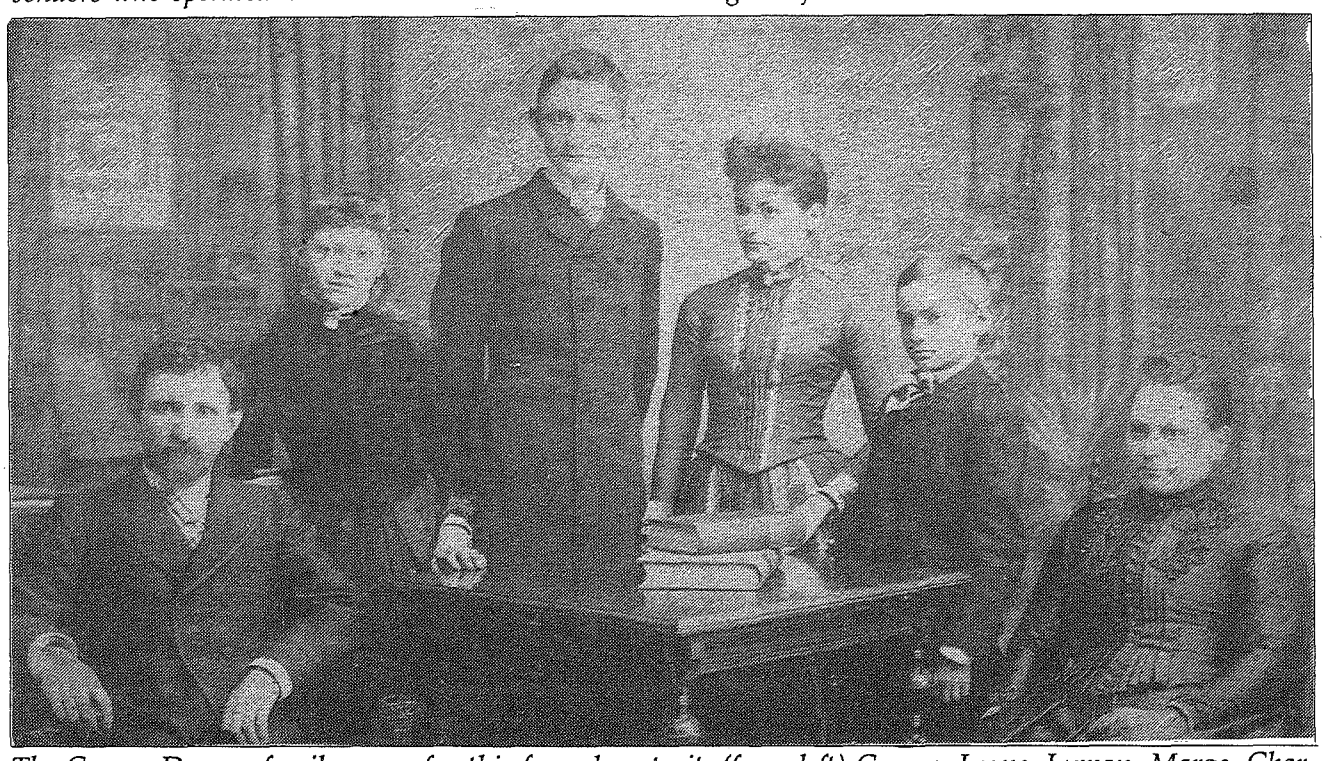
The Civil War is Tom's area of expertise — he has three sets of Civil War diaries, dozens of identified photographs of Union soldiers and numerous swords and uniforms and accessories.

His collection includes three letters written by a Rebel soldier, William H. Wall who served with Morgan's Raiders and was captured by Union forces at Lisbon. The letters were written during Wall's imprisonment at Rock Island Prison in Illinois and Tom conjectures that they were apparently smuggled out to avoid Union censors.

Robert Crew was an infant when this photo was taken by Hewitt's photographer who had studios in the Gurney Block along Broadway in Salem.



Robert Crew, a Salem boy, poses with the Lease brothers ice cream and bakery wagon in this 1900s photograph discovered by Tom Molecea of Boardman. The Lease firm was probably one of many small vendors who operated in the area and Robert delivered the goods for them. Crew later moved to Canton.



The George Donges family poses for this formal portrait: (from left) George, Leone, Lyman, Marge, Charley and the mother, Louise Donges.

Scrunch down and let the marbles fly

By David Wilkison
Associated Press writer

BEFORE NINTENDO, BEFORE skateboards, and even before television, the marble-take-marble world of commies, steelies, aggies and glassies kept children in the dirt and out of trouble.

Marbles are again on a roll, this time almost as a foreign game, on the same American playgrounds they once dominated.

"There are very few children today across the United States who know how to play marbles," says Michael Cohill of Akron, owner of the American Toy Marbles Museum.

"Now, we get a Cub Scout troop together or a church group or a school group and basically sit them down, tell them about the game and the history of it, and tell them how to shoot," Cohill said. "They learn how to do it and they have fun."

Marbles faithful are using a new series of museums, tournaments, traveling displays, and even books to rekindle the game.

"It's just the simplicity and the accessibility to every child that makes marbles so wonderful," said Cathy Runyan of Kansas City, Mo., an author on marbles games.

Runyan, 38, a homemaker who owns hundreds of thousands of marbles, travels the country teaching children how to play.

Marbles once went with reading, writing and arithmetic for most elementary schoolchildren who would hunker down to shoot games like potsies, chasies and poison.

The fear of losing a favorite commie, a handmade clay marble, was usually outweighed by the chance to take an opponent's prized milkie, a translucent white marble.

Pieces like commies and milkies made marbles as varied as the players. Aggies, often made from agate, are usually prized shooters and clearies were often translucent clear glass or solid colors. Steelies, not surprisingly, are remarkably like ball bearings.

It wasn't a playground bully, but technology that sent marbles spinning the way of jacks as children found blacktopped schoolyards and discovered television and Little League baseball.

"All of a sudden, they lost the place where they played," Cohill said. "Today, you have to put some effort into providing them with a surface.

"Traditionally, it was just an effortless game that cost nothing to get into. Fifty cents could buy you more marbles than you could use in a year," he said.

Cohill, 36, became fascinated with marbles in 1989 after he moved his fledgling toy company into a former marble factory. He opened his museum on the site last December and has a traveling museum currently in San Francisco.

More and more marbles tournaments are rolling into malls, parks and schools.

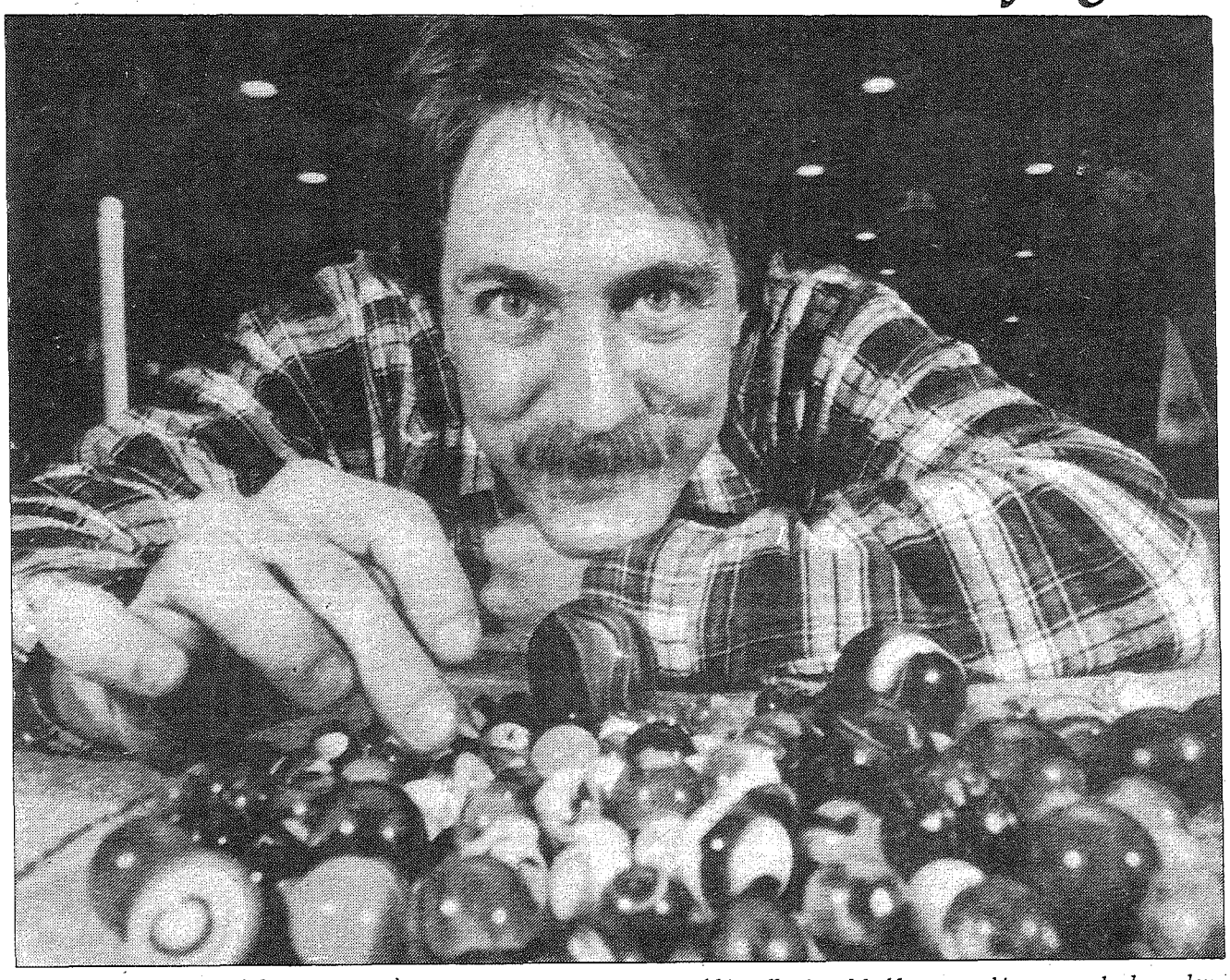
A national tournament that dates back to 1923 has been held every summer for the past 30 years on the beach at Wildwood, N.J., attracting youthful, but still steel-eyed, shooters from across the country.

Most champions come from Appalachian marble centers of West Virginia, the Maryland panhandle and western Pennsylvania.

"Those three areas in past years have been the real hotbeds," said tournament Director Gene Mason of Cumberland, Md. "Those areas have people that have sort of taken an interest through the years and have stuck with it."

Local champions compete for a chance at two championships and $2,000 scholarships. This year, more than 70 boys and girls are expected for the four-day tournament that begins June 24.

"In recent years, there's been sort of a gradual swelling of marble interest throughout the country," said Mason, director of parks and recreation in Cumberland.



Michael Cohill, owner of the American Toy Museum, peers across some of his collection. Marbles are making a comeback as playthings for kids and grownups alike. (AP LaserPhoto)

Games and variations by the dozen differ from region to region. But the champions play "Ringer," a game in which 13 marbles are placed in a cross within a 10-foot circle. The first player to knock seven marbles out of the ring wins.

West Virginia has fielded 16 champions, including current national boys champion, Carl Whitacre, 13, of Ridgeley, Mineral County.

"It's fun and it's easy to do," Whitacre said.

Laura Brader, director of the marble tournament in Reading, Pa., since 1977, became engrossed with the sport as an adult.

"I was...told part of my job would be to escort the city winners to the national tournament and I knew I wasn't going to like it," Ms. Brader said. "I hated sand and sun and wasn't particularly fond of children. In 1977, I brought home the girls champion and after that I was hooked."

The Reading tournament, which draws more than 800 kids a year, fielded the 1990 girls national champion, 11-year-old Alison Reber of Fleetwood, Pa. Her brother was the 1987 national champion.

"I didn't think too much of it as a sport when they first started," said her father, Ralph Reber, 41, who never played marbles as a child.