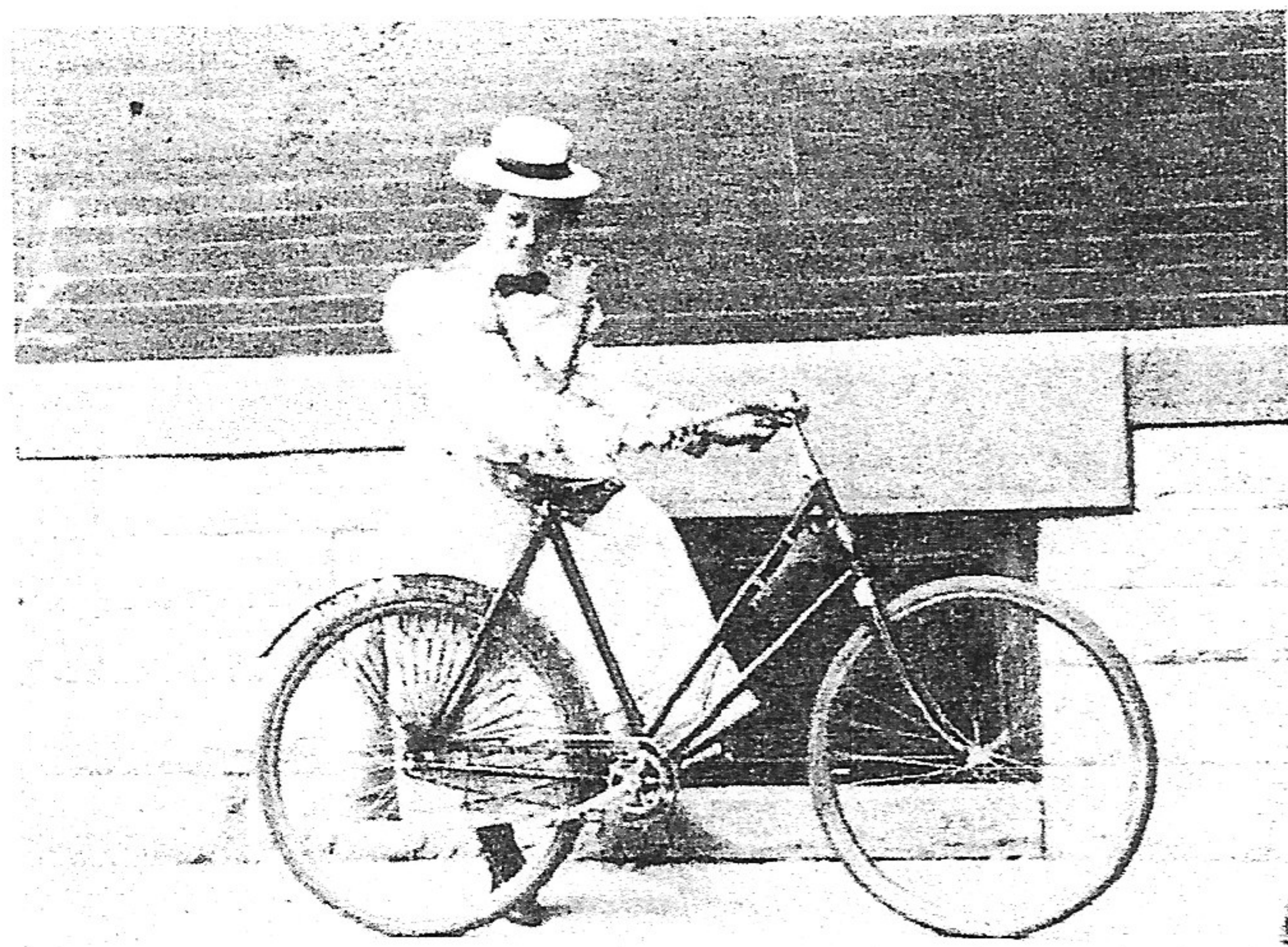


tem. This improvement was also constructed under F.E.R.A. (Federal Emergency Relief Act). In Camden's projects, the corporation paid for the materials from mortgage revenue bonds, which was only approximately thirty percent of the total construction cost. The balance came as a federal relief grant.

A recent project for the improvement of the village is a municipal park in the north end of town known as the Water Works Park. This project was first started and sponsored by the Camden Lions Club in 1954. Since the park was laid out, trees have been planted, a wading pool for children has been built, a horseshoe court laid out, and a shelterhouse was completed in September 1961.



Recreation — 1895 — Leone Wall

If James Moore, James Black, and Isaac Sutton could return to Camden to see the village one hundred and fifty years after it had been laid out, they could see that the population has not grown tremendously in number, but the townspeople have practically all the advantages and conveniences of their neighbors in larger towns and cities.

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF CAMDEN

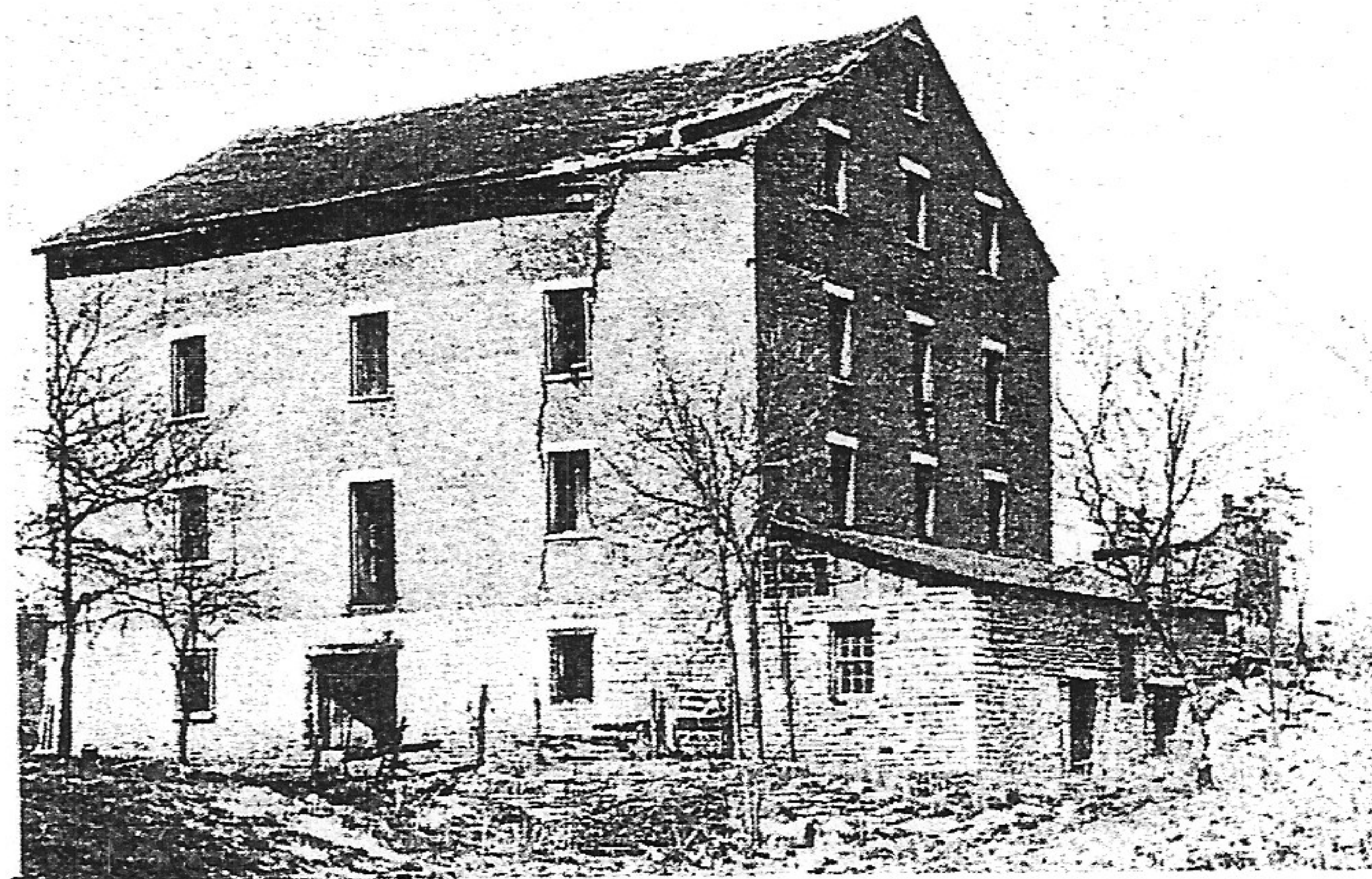
The village (Dover, Newcomb, then Camden) has always catered to the economic needs and necessities of a rural community. In the early years of the town many of the industries were dependent

Compliments of Harris Metal Works — Camden

upon the agricultural products of the soil. Later, when the vast supply of gravel near the town was recognized, several new industries sprung up which proved to be the backbone of Camden's industrial life.

As early as 1810 or 1812 John Stubbs, Sr. had a carding machine located along the Seven Mile Creek south of what later became Camden, in connection with his sawmill. Until 1832 he did a great deal of work there. At a later date, carding was carried on with horsepower in Camden by Samuel Cornwell. Still later, from 1840-1850, the same business was conducted on Main Street by John and Amos Mills. From 1854-1860, Mr. Samuel Hibbard had such an establishment. As early as 1847, Mr. Hibbard also had a woolen factory in the village.

Gristmills were more widely distributed than any other type of pioneer manufacturing. These mills meant better food and more money to the community where they were located. The first gristmill in Somers Township was built by William Irwin in 1808 about a mile north of Camden on the east side of Seven Mile Creek. This was in operation until 1825 when Matthew McClung erected a second one on the same site. David Barnett bought and finished the mill in 1835. After running the mill for a number of years he abandoned it and in 1850 constructed a three-story brick building very close to the one started by McClung. It was provided with fire runs of the best buhrs. This mill served the community until



Barnett's Mill — Built in 1850

about 1880. The ruins of the building have been used the last several years as a shelter for tools. Another well known mill was built by Major Robinson and his son, James, in 1816 on the east side of Seven Mile Creek at the north edge of Camden. It was small, having but one run of stones. The mill passed into the hands of James Barnett and sons in 1831, and they rebuilt it and put in three sets of buhrstones. This mill changed hands a number of times until in 1873 it was bought at an assignee's sale by John and Henry Brubaker. Thereafter it was known as the Brubaker Mill.



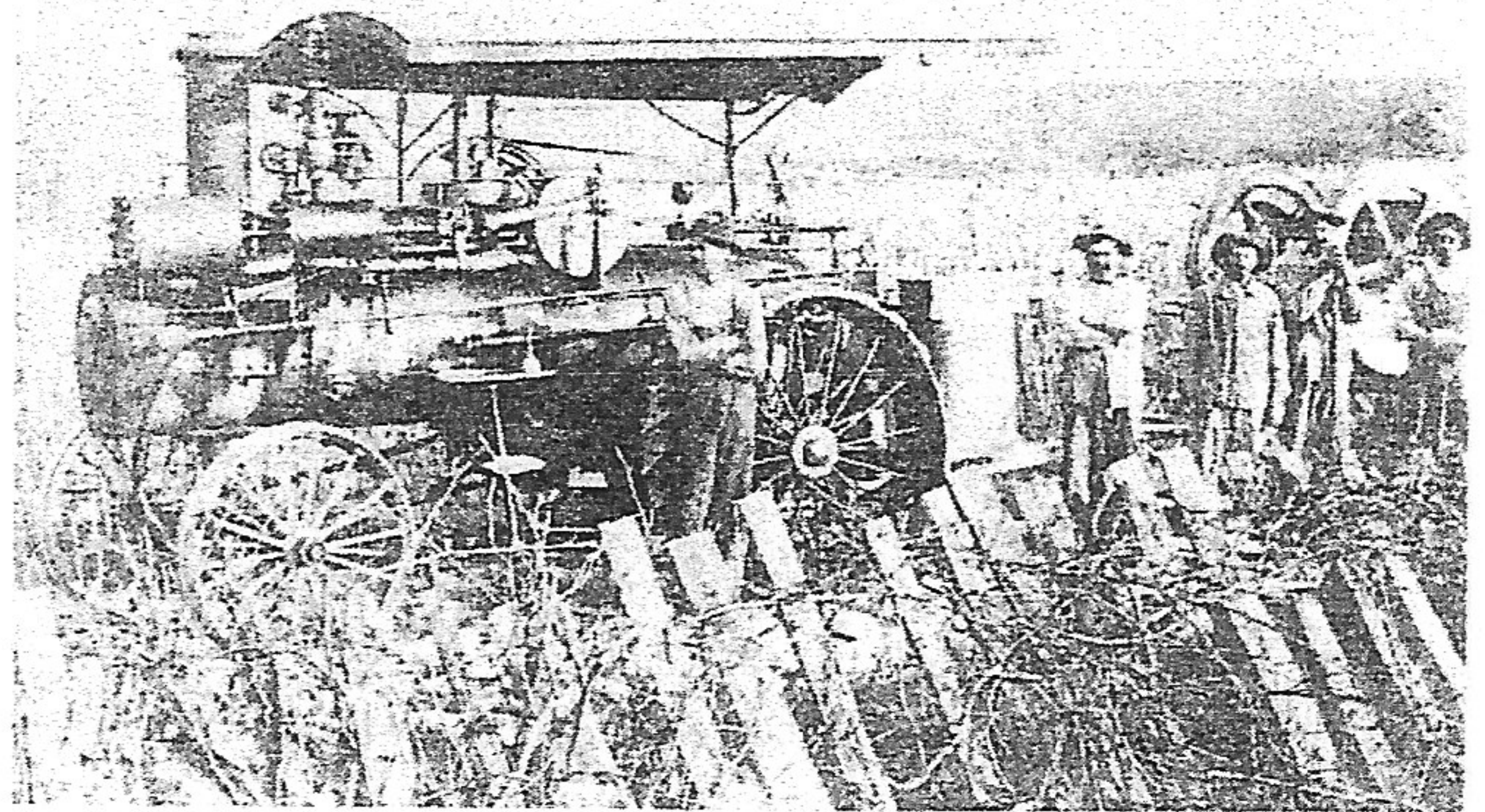
The Brubaker Mill — 1875

John Stubbs built a sawmill south of town upon the east side of Seven Mile Creek. Several years later, 1834, he erected a good grist mill. Later it passed into the hands of James Barnett and William Whitesides who operated it on a very extensive scale as Barnett and Whitesides. The building was destroyed by fire in 1862, but it was replaced in 1866 by a larger and costlier one which in December, 1875 also burned. The new mill which was constructed in 1866 was a three-story building, slate roofed, and cost about \$45,000. From 1850 to 1871 the firm did a very fine business. During the Civil War and a few years afterwards it manufactured and shipped large quantities of flour. It was regarded as one of the strongest and best firms engaged in that business in southwestern

Ohio. The continued shrinking of prices that followed the Civil War proved too great for them. The depression that preceded the 1873 panic pulled the firm down and it failed.

Another industry of great importance to Camden was the manufacture of barrels, tubs, and hogsheads. Such shops were often close to flour mills and pork packing houses. One of the early coopers in Camden was John Brennan who came from Baltimore in 1830. His cooper shop was in the backyard of his home located on the east side of Main Street (south half of Caskey's Furniture Store). Another early cooper shop was located on the southwest corner of Hendricks and Liberty Streets. A Mr. Armstrong was one of the coopers who worked there. In 1859 Joseph B. Acton, another cooper came to Camden from Eaton to be superintendent over the shops of Barnett and Whitesides who were at that time doing a flourishing business. They needed many barrels in which to ship their flour. These men owned two cooper shops just south of town, west of Seven Mile Creek close to Route 127, which could easily accommodate ten coopers. Besides, this same firm owned a stave factory. Close to their shops were two ponds where hoops were soaked after the hoop poles had been split. Mr. Acton had charge of the Barnett and Whitesides' shops until the business failed.

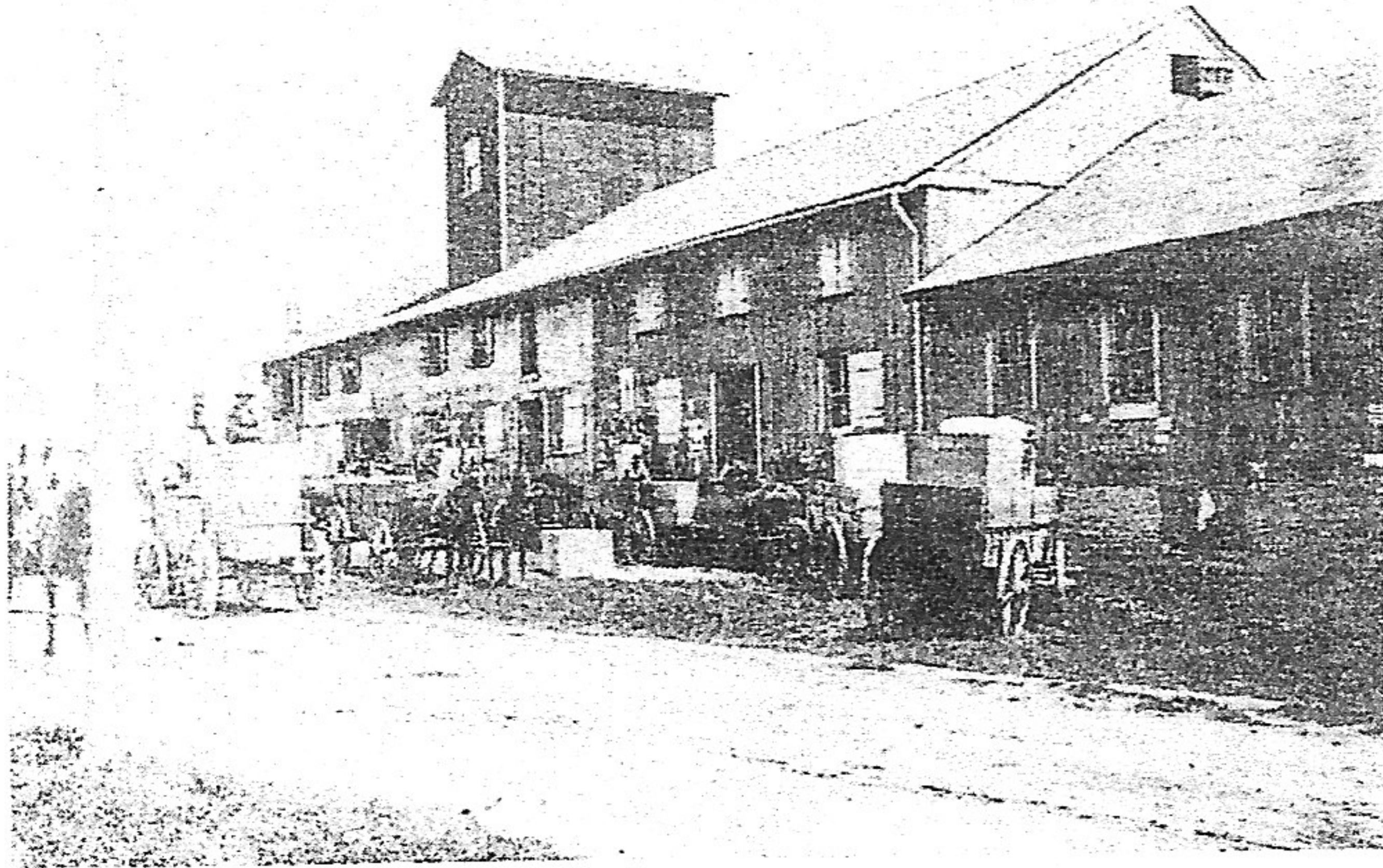
Many bushels of corn from the Camden area went to market in the shape of hogs. Cincinnati became an excellent market for the Camden community since as early as 1833 it was an important



Steam power was useful to the early farmers.

*Compliments of Jefferies Grocery & Meat Market — Camden
Dave Dunkelberger & Sons Feed & Fuel — Somerville*

meat packing center. Preble County needed a close market because it was a great producer of hogs. Benjamin Myers, a wide awake and enterprising businessman of Camden, saw a financial opportunity in opening a pork packing plant in the village. Hogs could easily be driven into town to be slaughtered and a railroad was there to ship out



Jumbo Elevator — 1900. Site of Ben Myer's meat packing plant in 1850's and 60's.

the barrels of meat. In 1850, Mr. Myers went into the pork packing business. His packing house was located on S. Main Street in a building which was later used as a grain elevator. During the early



Buell's Mill — 1968. This was formerly known as the Jumbo Elevator

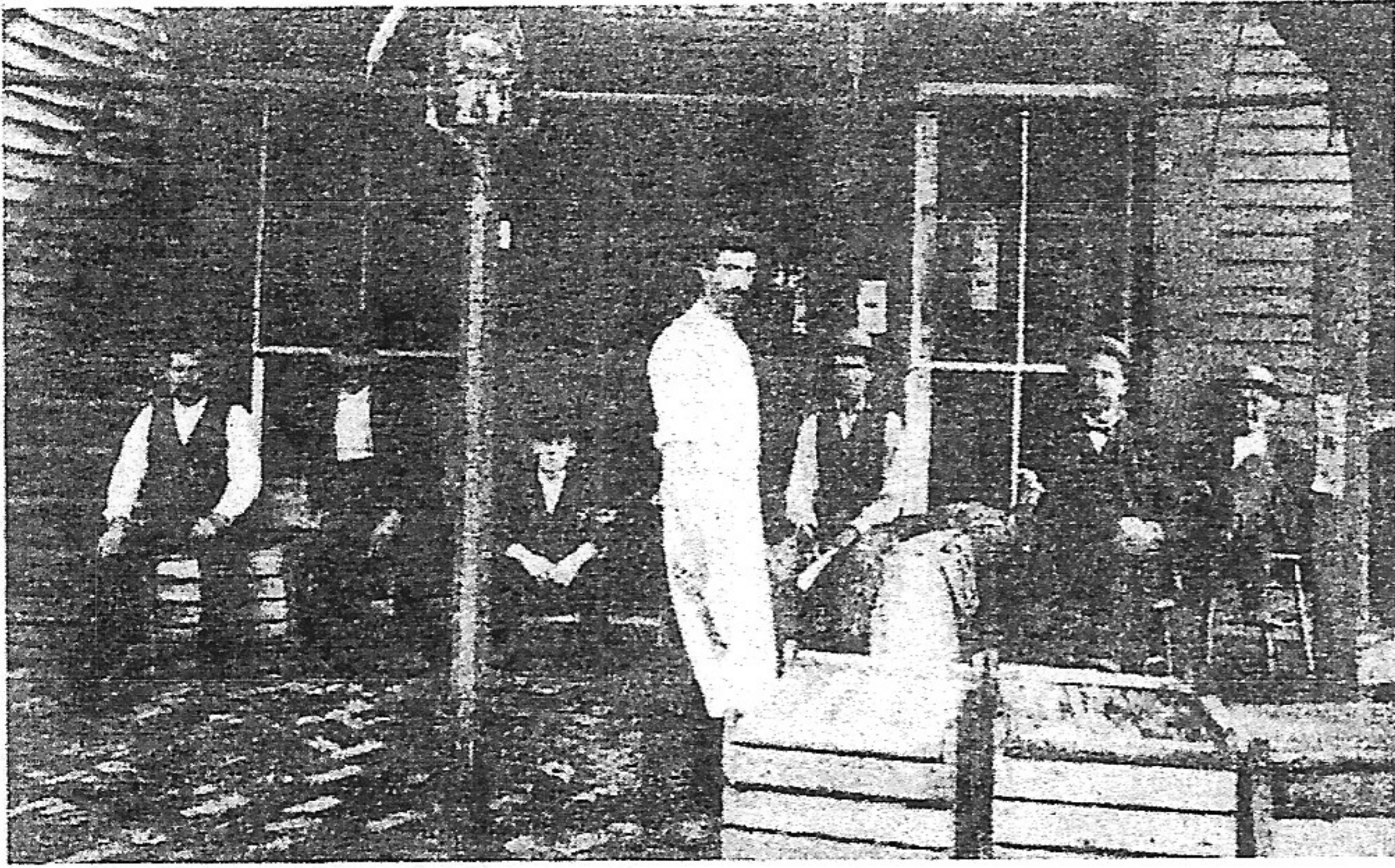
years of the Civil War, Mr. Myers did a very thriving business by selling pork to the South. In the winter of 1860, 17,000 hogs were packed in Camden. Within the next three years his business must have increased because it is recorded he made a fortune but lost it all in 1863. Mr. Myers shipped his barrels of pork to Cincinnati by train, and then sent them by boat down the Ohio River to the South. When Vicksburg fell in 1863 the Ohio River was controlled by the North so supplies could no longer reach the South by the river. It was at this time that Mr. Myers lost heavily because he had a large quantity of pork enroute to the South but it never reached its destination. Because of the spoilage of meat and the loss of his main market, the fortune that he had amassed was soon gone. People who had invested in the business likewise lost heavily.

Bricks were manufactured in southern Ohio during territorial days and the industry became an important one in Camden. In 1853 a brick yard was started in Camden on North Main Street where the Presbyterian Church now stands. Franklin Pierce and Henry Wysong, the operators, furnished and laid the bricks for the schoolhouse, located on the corner of Lafayette and Central Avenue, which was built in 1853. That year the same firm erected the J. H. Bohn Drug Store. Another brick yard and tile factory was established in 1878 on S. Main Street where Neff & Fry Company now stands. They turned out about one hundred and fifty thousand bricks per year and about six thousand rods of tile. A few years later, Mr. Robert Beasley operated a brick yard just west of town. From this yard came the bricks for the Town Hall, Methodist Church, Nonpareil, and the E. C. Eikenberry home.

As the various industries were developing and functioning in the village, the merchandising houses grew to meet the diverse needs of the community. When the village was laid out in 1818 James Black had the only general store and tavern. During the town's growth, a number of general

stores and other types, too, have opened and closed their doors.

Thirty-five years after the first store opened in Camden, 1853, Camden was a thriving little town with a population of about 400 people. Besides the well known mills, the town had a grocery and bakery owned by Thomas Longnecker, a grocery and liquor store on the east side of Main Street kept by John Sponable, and a grocery by Henry Williams (now Bailey's store). The meat supply was furnished by Joseph Danner, father of W. A.



**Bill Danner's Meat Store 1900 —
Now Ehy's Dress Shop**

Danner. Isaac Craig, kept a dry goods and notion store where the Collet block now stands. Benjamin Myers was in the dry goods business in the building he erected in 1851, now known as the Odd Fellows Building. It was at this time that he also was extensively engaged in pork packing on S. Main



**Main St. looking south — 1920.
IOOF Building built by Ben Myers in 1851**

*Compliments of Register Herald — Eaton
Camden Ready-Mix — Camden & Eaton*

Street in the building later known as the Jumbo Elevator. Another well known merchant at this time was Clinton Chadwick who built the fine brick building on N. Main Street now known as the Dearth Building. He continued in his business until 1862. During his last twelve years William Pottenger was his partner and their store was known as Wm. Pottenger and Co.—a very fine and well stocked store. Many travelers in 1853 were entertained at the Preble House (also known as European Hotel and Danser House) located on the southeast corner of Main and Hendricks Streets where the Masonic Temple is now located. This tavern was built in 1846 and Daniel Payne remained its proprietor for fifteen years. Another tavern was kept in the John Manly house on East Central Avenue (now the Orma Witherby property). On N. Main Street Chauncey Carroll had a tavern known as the Camden House (now Buell's Service Station). All through the years Camden has had its share of taverns.

Bohn's apothecary shop which had been opened in 1842 was a very essential as well as fascinating place in the village. The tall, beautiful bottles of spices, herbs, salts, and wines were delightful to behold. It was in 1853 that Mr. Bohn built the fine brick building on S. Main Street into which he moved his drug business and practiced there until his death twenty-two years later.

During these years Mr. Bohn retained a good business. After Mr. Bohn's death a drug store remained in the Bohn Building until 1933 when M. V. Bryson moved his drug store to the Dearth Building in the room where the post office once was located and later was occupied by Robert Green's Grocery. After Mr. Bryson's death in 1943, the new owner, Leroy Witter, moved the business one door south to the present drug store location. Two years later, the drug store was sold to Malcolm Webb of Hamilton. Again it was sold in 1952 but in 1959 Mr. Webb purchased the drug store back from Jack Tompert. Mr. Webb is the present owner of Webbs Drugs which is not only attractive, but a very well stocked drug store.



Webb's Drug Store — 1968

Today Mr. Webb is not only well known for maintaining a fine drug store, but for being responsible for employing the Triangle Sign Co. to repair and put into running order the clock which is on the tower atop the third floor of the Drug Store Building (Dearth Building). For seventy-five years the clock had had no hands or any mechanism inside it. Today Camden is quite proud of its tower clock which is the only one in the county.

About fifty years later or by 1902, a few of the same names appeared on windows and signs which had been there much earlier; new ones had come later but now had disappeared; and too, there

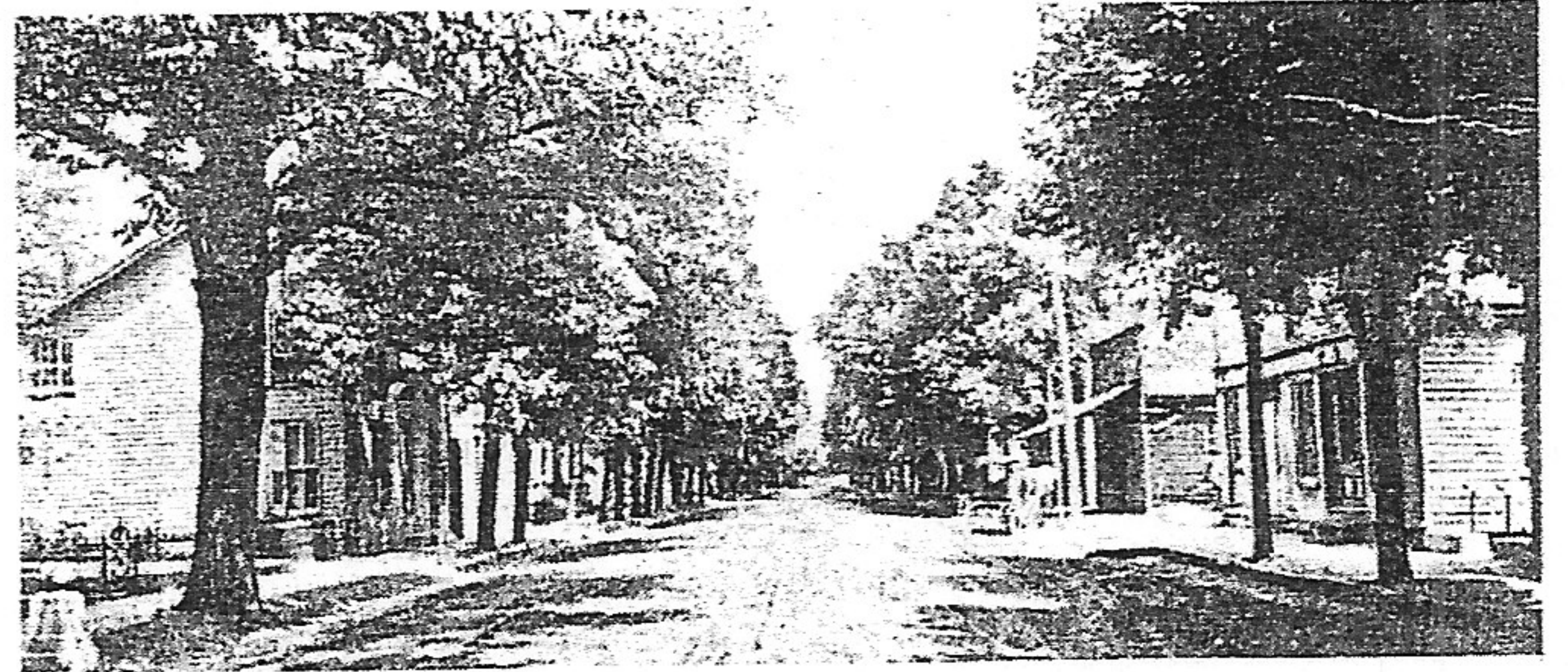


**Fred Neff's Grocery Store about 1900 —
now Harvey's Restaurant**

were new signs and names in the community, and some of these are seen yet in 1968.

By early 1900, the harness shop which had been opened by Irvin Anderson (father of Sherwood

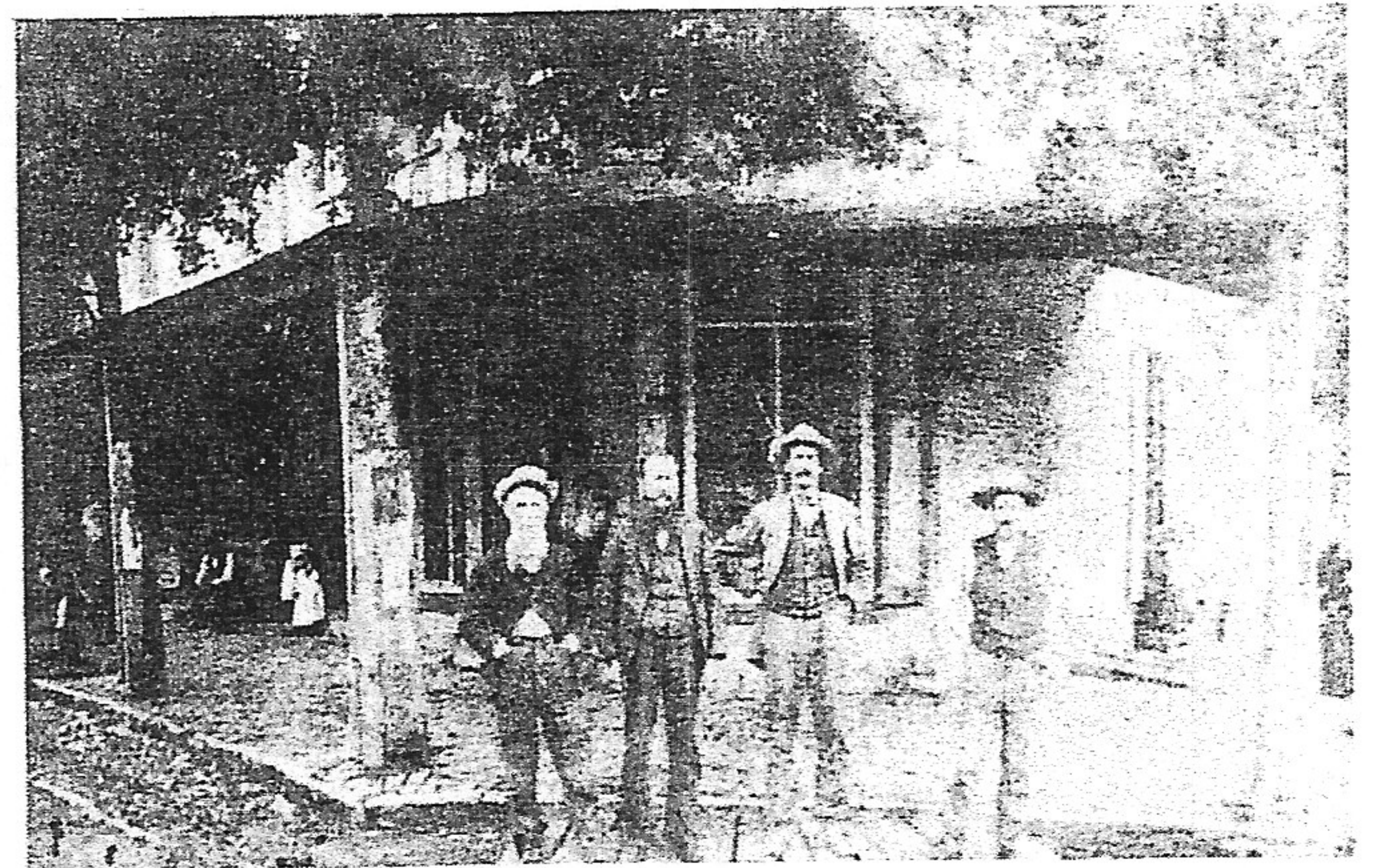
Anderson) in 1874 had been closed for several years, but Mr. W. S. May had opened a harness shop (was in the Duckwall Building—now the south room of Shank's) and was advertising with the slogan, "My harness will make your horse glad". The shop of Stephen Bertsch who had come to Camden in 1876 and had manufactured buggies, carriages, and wagons, was now being run by



Main St. looking north 1921. Horse tied in front of McGriff's Blacksmith Shop. Bertsch's Buggy and Carriage Shop south of blacksmith shop.

his son, Ernest, who had converted it to a paint shop not only for buggies and carriages but for cars, too. (Loan & Building is at that location now.)

Old names such as Ben Myers, Chadwick, and Pottenger were no longer seen but were replaced by others whose stores were not called general stores but were now known as department stores. Charles White and Frank Eikenberry were doing a fine business in such a store (now where Camden Hardware is) since 1893. Charles White purchased the entire store in 1912 and continued until his

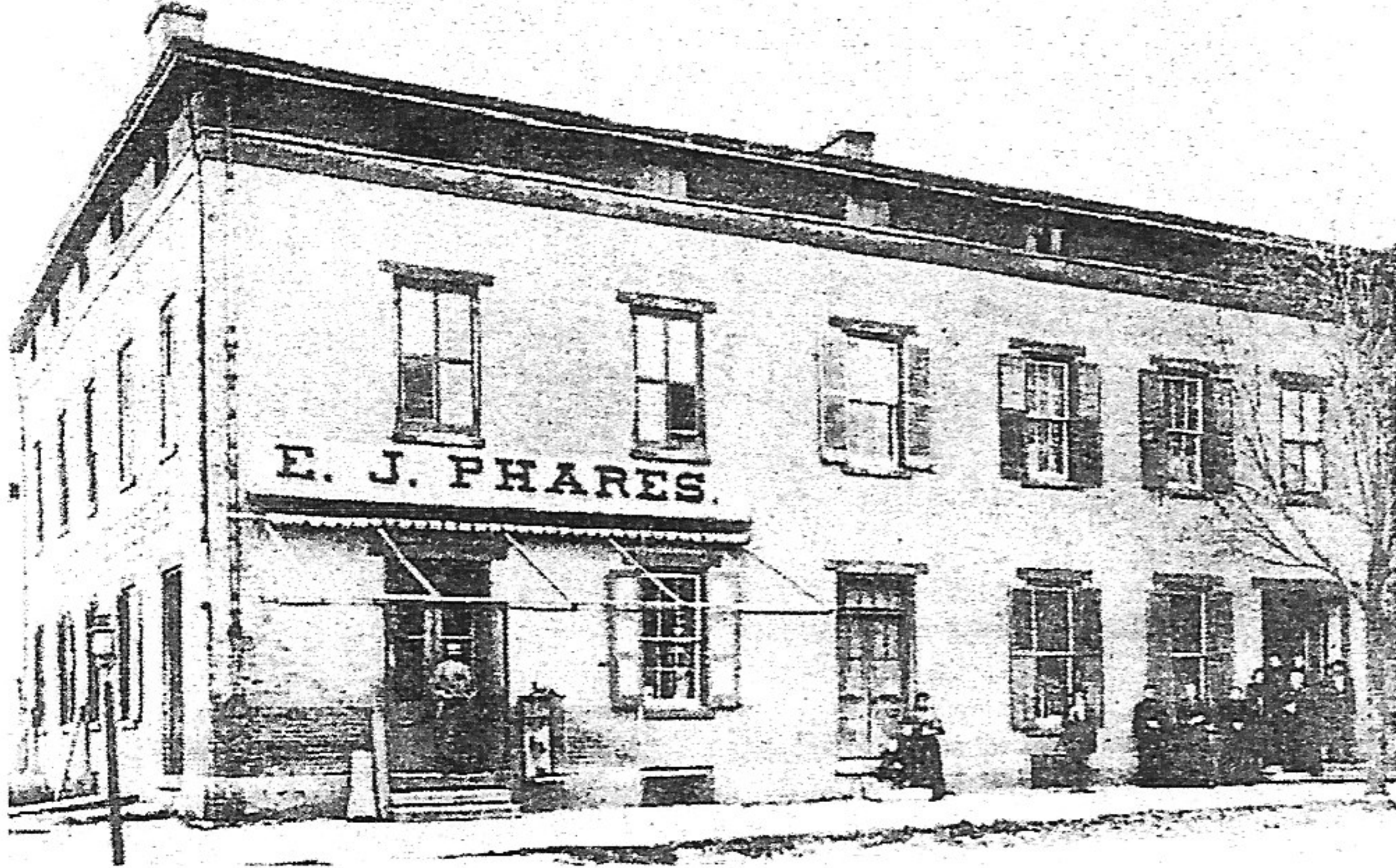


**Coon's Hardware Store 1893 —
now Telephone Building**

*Compliments of White Gravel Co. — Camden
Vernon Caskey Furniture Co. — Camden*

death in 1919. This store remained in business under the direction of his widow, Tura R. White, until the 1930's.

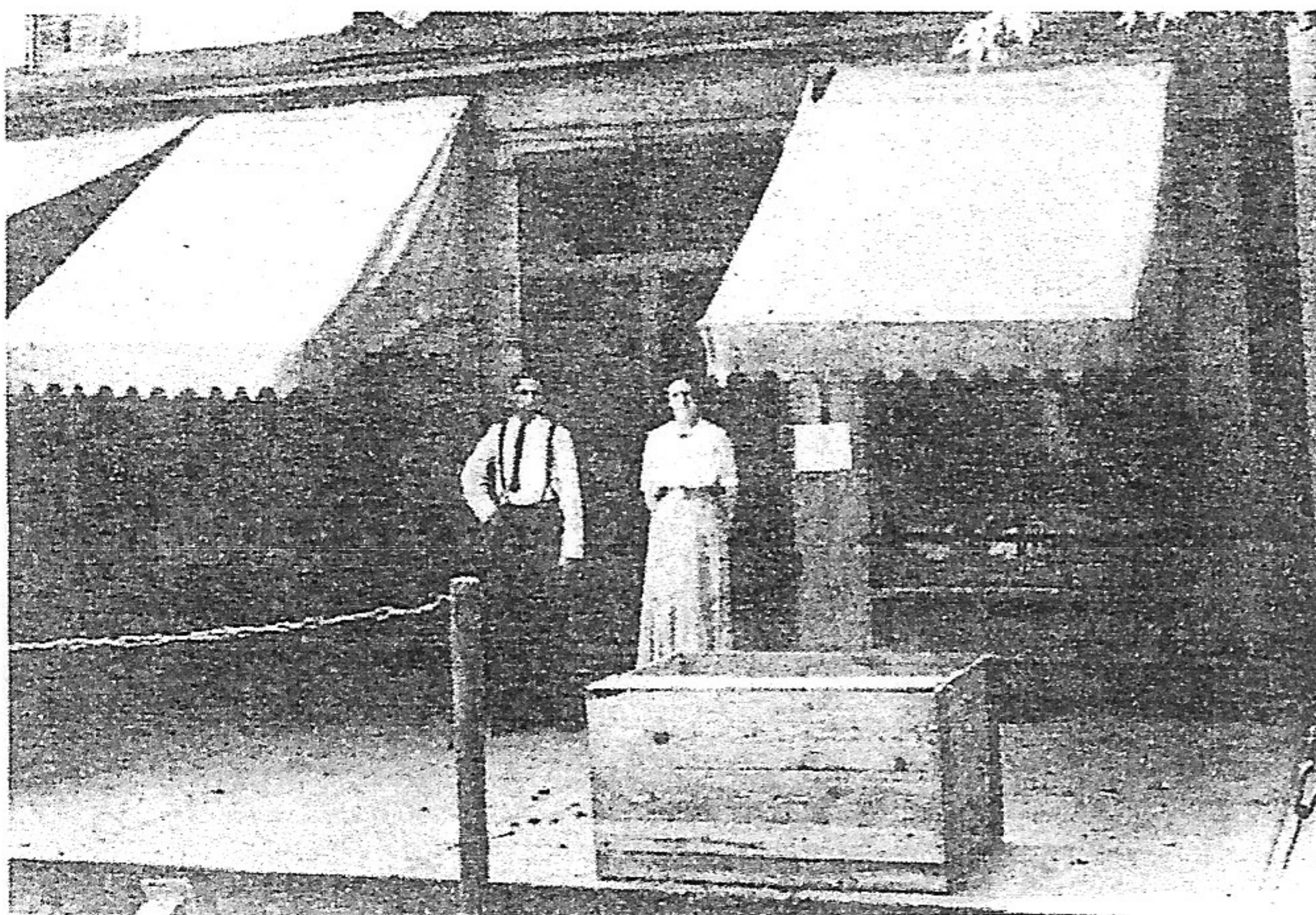
Another name connected with a thriving department store was E. J. Phares who in 1895 took over the Earhart store which was in the building now known as the Dearth Building. Later James



E. J. Phares General Store 1891 — Building was known as Earhart Building now the Dearth Bldg.

and Sylvia Sizelove were operators of this department store. In the 1930's the Sizeloves moved their business to S. Main Street (now Michael's Pool-room) where they operated a grocery in the same building where they had had a small dry goods store before taking over the E. J. Phares store.

In 1902 H. C. Williams still had a grocery and was yet advertising as "The Old Reliable Grocer".

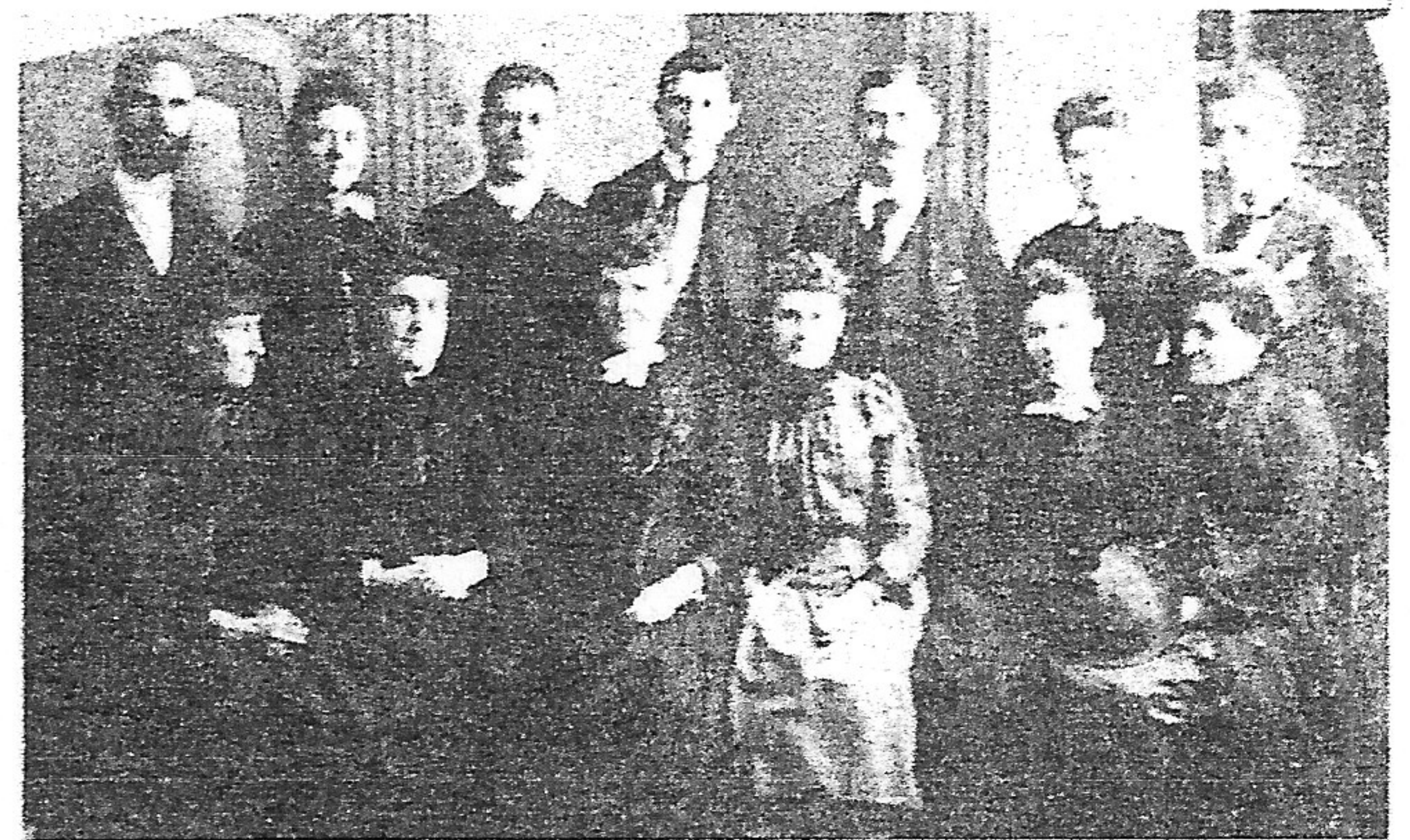


Sizelove Dry Goods Store, S. Main St. 1905 — Jim and Sylvia Sizelove

Of his thirty years in business, Mr. Williams stated that 1902 had been his best year with the exception of 1893. This store is still in business at the same location on S. Main Street but with a different owner, Clarence Bailey, who along with his father had purchased the store in 1919. Mr. Bailey has kept his store almost strictly as a grocery store except for a few items of men's wearing apparel.

Jacob Collet also retained a store in 1902, but by then it was called Collet and Son. Mr. Collet started his clothing store in 1855 on the west side of Main Street where Shank's south room is located. Several years later, 1884, Collet's constructed a fine brick building on the east side of Main Street where their clothing store was moved. The Collet family has maintained a clothing store for men at this location for eighty-four years. For one hundred-thirteen consecutive years the Collets have served the community well. Their merchandise has always been of the most modern styles and the very best quality.

By the early 1900's Mr. W. E. McChristie was doing a thriving business. In 1889 he had erected a large brick structure known as The Nonpareil (the name means Very Best) on the corner of Main and Hendricks Streets for his business of taking and finishing pictures, and mounting old family photographs. Some very fine artists came to Camden to work for Mr. McChristie who carried on an extensive business both by express and through the postoffice. His work could be found



Nonpareil Workers — 1890. Top row, 2nd left — Amy Danser; 5th, left — Lee Danser

*Compliments of Morton & Woodbury Farm Drainage & Excavating — Camden
Halfway Tavern — Camden*

in nearly every state of the union. This business was very helpful to the community because it not only attracted talented people to the town, but it gave work to the local citizens.

A new industry known as the South Side Lumber Company (owned by R. T. Acton) came to Camden at the close of the year 1902. It furnished lumber and building supplies for the community. This lumber company was bought from Mr. Acton by the late Thomas Donohoe in 1911, who conducted the business until his death. Since 1951, the lumber yard has been in charge of Dwight Donohoe, a son of Tom Donohoe. This is another of Camden's business places that has been serving the community faithfully for a number of years.

Another very welcome industry came to town the same year under the name of The Enterprise Packing Company. The company was made up of leading business men who erected a large and commodious tomato canning factory and warehouse on land south of Camden. During the first year over \$30,000 worth of business was transacted. More than two hundred acres of tomatoes had been contracted at seven dollars per ton. It was strictly a home enterprise for over a hundred citizens. The factory was operated until a fire destroyed the building on June 20, 1928.

Another industry came in the early 1900's to Camden. The Four Tobacco Company began business in 1901 in the Payne Elevator Building. (This building was west of the railroad at the intersection of Depot Street and Central Avenue.) These quarters were abandoned in 1902 when a brick warehouse was erected near the railroad south of Central Avenue. This company employed as many as forty-five people during the season. In 1902 more than eight-hundred cases of tobacco were handled. This warehouse was closed for a few years, then opened in the late twenties at which time several women were employed to stem tobacco. The warehouse is now the property of Neff & Fry Co. which bought it in 1942 to manufacture practice bombs for defense.

The Duskey family has been connected with the

hardware business for over sixty years. R. R. (Dick) Duskey operated a hardware store from March, 1907 until his death nineteen years later.



Duskey Hardware Co. — 1968

The Camden Hardware Company was established in June, 1926 by Robert Duskey, a son of R. R. Duskey, in the same building on the corner of Central Avenue and Second Street where his father had kept store. Later in 1933 the Camden Hardware Co. moved to Main Street where Shank's Variety Store is now located and there they stayed until March, 1938 when the store was moved to its present location on the corner of Main and Central Avenue in the Odd Fellows Building which was built by Benjamin Myers in 1851. Duskeys not only furnish a large area with hardware items, but supply many families with bottled gas.

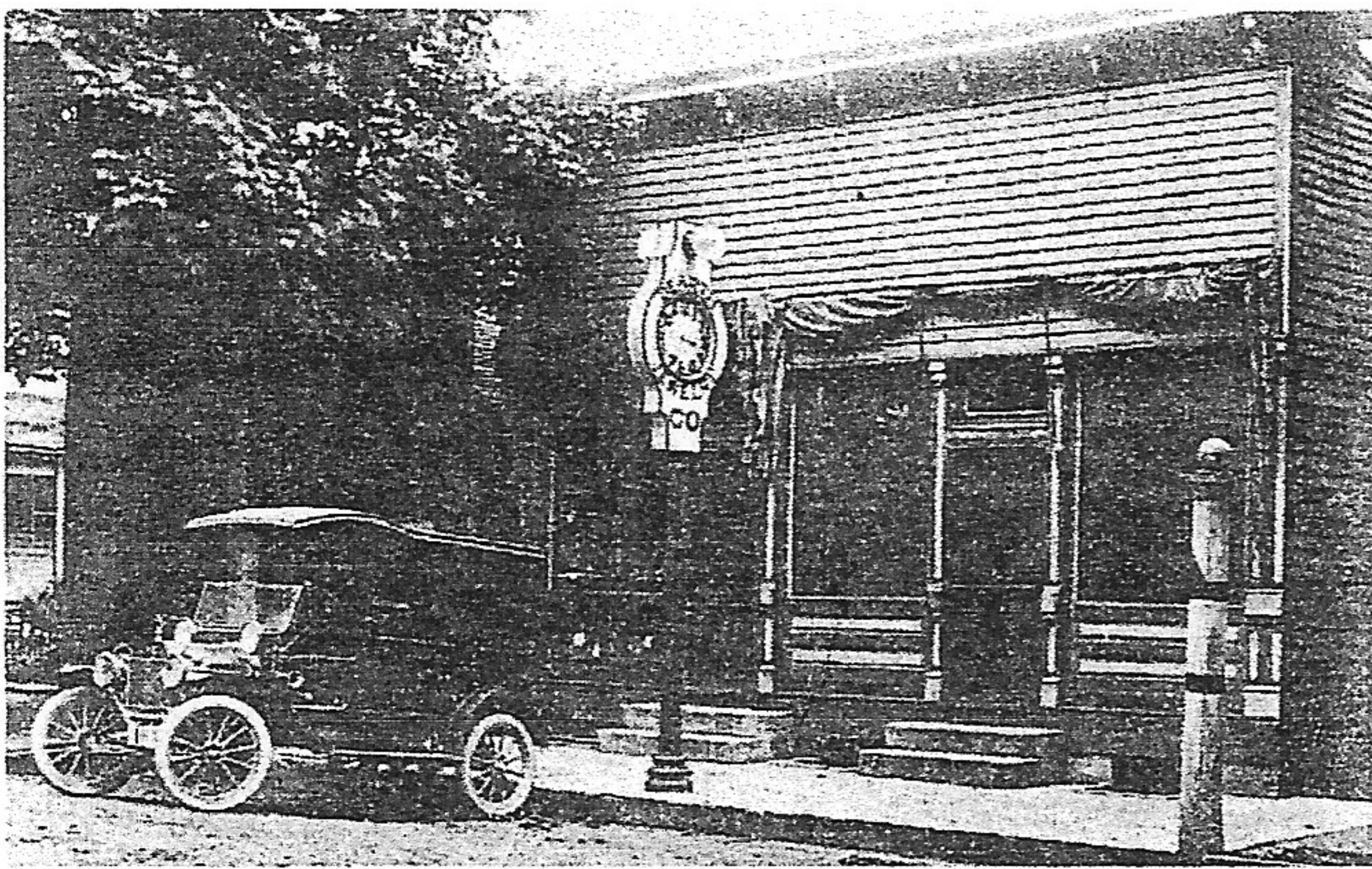
Another hardware store, the Superior Hardware Store, is located on West Central Avenue. At this



West Central Ave. — 1920

*Compliments of Camden Progressive Club
Camden Steel Corporation*

location, a grocery and meat market was operated from 1865-68 by William Brower the father of Hattie Hibbins, who now operates an antique shop in one of the oldest houses (built around 1828) in Camden. In 1868, Mr. Brower left this street and moved to South Main. The lot he vacated was later bought by B. M. Fornshell who built a new building to house his tinware shop. In 1877 he moved into his new shop which was stocked full of first class goods. The son, Glen Fornshell, took over the store in 1918 and ran the business until his death. At that time the property and business were inherited by George Craig, who reopened the store in 1944. Since Mr. Craig's death in 1959, his wife, Chastine, has very capably run the store even though she had not previously managed a hardware store.



**Dearth's Jewelry Store and Barber Shop,
N. Main St. — 1914**

Shank's Variety Store on S. Main Street has been another leading concern for over fifty years. The store was established by the late Jacob Shank in 1911 as Shank's 5, 10, and 25c Store in part of the Sam Shellenbarger Building (now Mary's Jewelry Store). In 1917, the store was moved to the first floor of the Telephone Building on the corner of Main and Central Avenue where they stayed until 1938. At that time they bought the building which houses the north half of their store. For several years Harvey Favinger had operated a bakery at this location. In 1963, Shank's enlarged their store by buying the Duckwall Building and using

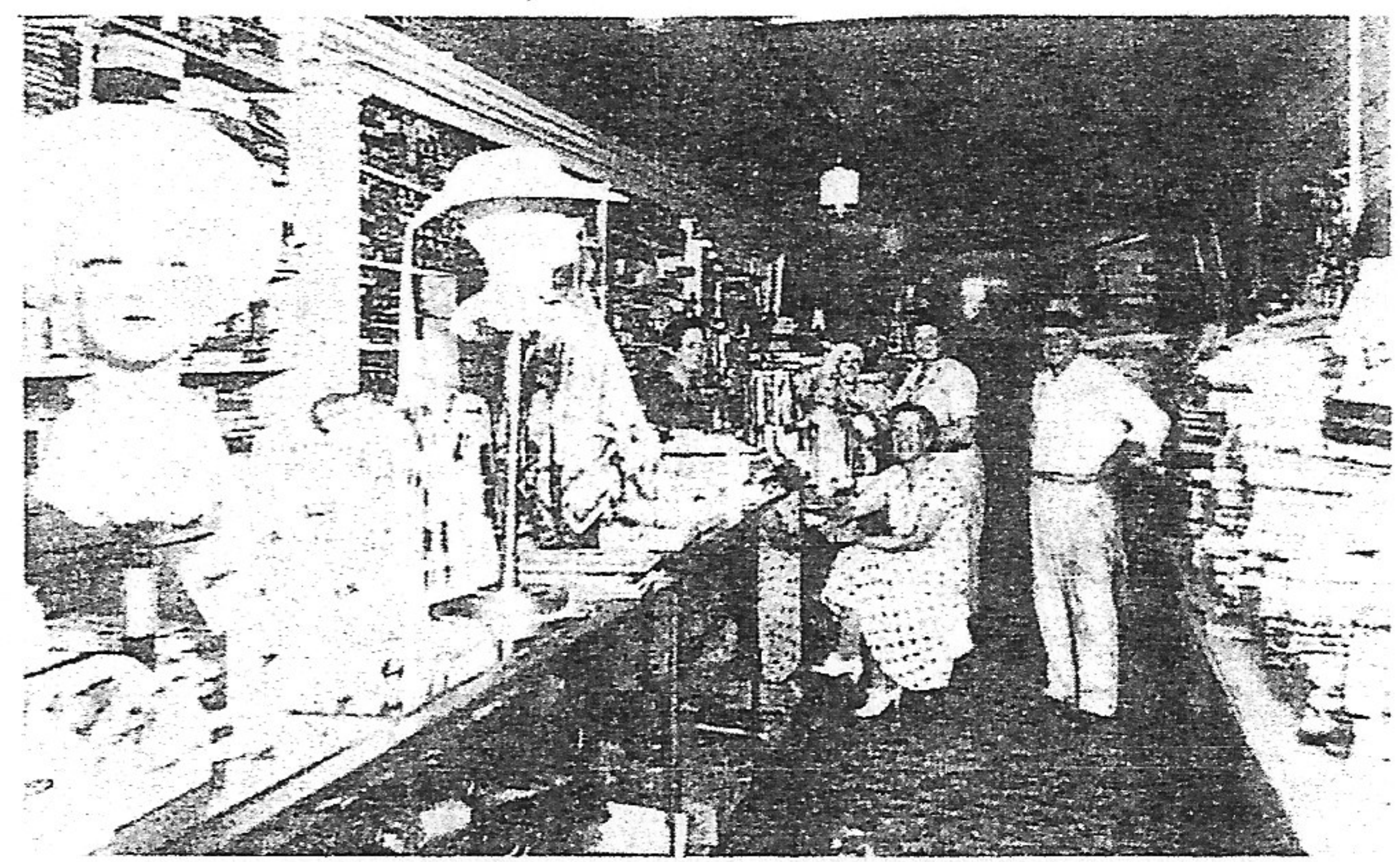
*Compliments of The Eaton Loan & Home Aid Co.
Somerville National Bank*



Shank's Variety Store — 1914

the north half which in 1892 had housed a millinery shop operated by Lily Morlatt Jones, who was the mother of Nelle Jones. (Miss Jones is responsible for collecting the invaluable material found in the Camden Archives at the Library.) After the death of Mrs. Jacob Shank in 1950 (Mr. Shank had died several years previously) her two sons operated the store, but for the past few years Earl Shank, the older son, has been the sole owner.

Another well established business for over fifty years is the Jessie B. Roberts' Store which had its beginning in August, 1914. Mrs. Roberts first had a millinery store in the front part of her house. At that time Lee Danser's jewelry store was in the room to the north. The jewelry store stayed there until 1924 when it was moved to the second building north. At that time Mrs. Roberts changed her store from a strictly millinery shop to a dry goods



Interior of Jessie Robert's Store — 1940

store and millinery shop and moved to the room vacated by Lee Danser. Since then Mrs. Roberts has increased the items in her store until the business she now operates is equal to a small department store.



About 1885 — Lee Danser's Jewelry Store.
The location is south of the Masonic Temple.

Camden has some stores and businesses that haven't been here so long, but, they, too have helped to make our community a very good place to live. The Bohn Building is still in use and has been occupied by the Jefferies Grocery and Meat Market since 1952 and owned by Ernest Jefferies since 1962. The Jefferies Market is especially known for its fine home killed meat. Before moving to the present location Mr. Jefferies operated a similar store on S. Main Street in the south half of what is now Caskey's Furniture Store. (Around 1870 this place was known as the McCord Boarding House.)

Vernon Caskey, the owner of Caskey's Furniture Store, has been in business for over thirty-five years. In 1933 the Caskeys opened and operated a small grocery store in the south half of the building now used for the furniture business. This continued until 1947 when Ernest Jefferies took over the grocery. At that time Caskeys opened a furniture store just north of their former grocery in the building where the William Fornshell family lived



McCord's Hardware Store about 1900.
Now Caskey's Display Room

in the 1890's and where they published the Camden Gazette. When Ernest Jefferies moved to the Bohn Building in 1952, Vernon Caskey expanded his furniture business and occupied the former grocery storeroom. Again in 1961, he expanded more when he bought the McCord Building and used it as a very attractive display room. Caskey's Furniture Store is known and patronized not only by citizens of this community but by people who live as far away as Richmond, Dayton, and Cincinnati.



Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Caskey in front of their display room — 1968

White's IGA Store, located on East Central Avenue, is another business that is fairly new but it's in an old setting. Mr. White has been in business in Camden just two years since buying John Por-

*Compliments of Dick Alexander Pepsi Distributor — Gratis
R. C. Nein & Sons Funeral Home — Camden*

ter's White Villa Store. Herschel Brown and John Porter opened a White Villa grocery on South Main Street in June, 1935 where the Jefferies Market is now. In March, 1943 Mr. Porter bought out his partner's share and in less than a year moved to East Central Avenue to the building he had recently purchased. Here he remained in business until he sold his store to Mr. White in 1966.

The building the IGA now occupies was known for many years as The White House Hotel, but it was originally built as Bennett's Opera House. According to old records the Opera House was used not only for some very fine home talent entertainment but traveling troupers also brought good programs to town. The Bennett Opera House was used until the new Opera House and City Hall was completed in 1889 and made available for local and traveling entertainers. Sometime after this, the Bennett Opera House was sold to Jim Smith who made the building into a hotel known as The White House Hotel. It was quite prosperous and was used as a hotel until the early 1900's. After it was no longer used as such, the second floor was rented out in single rooms or in small apartments, while the downstairs housed many different and varied businesses such as a barber shop, cream station, church assembly room, Kroger store, restaurant, and bowling alley until it finally was taken over by John Porter for his White Villa Store in January, 1944.

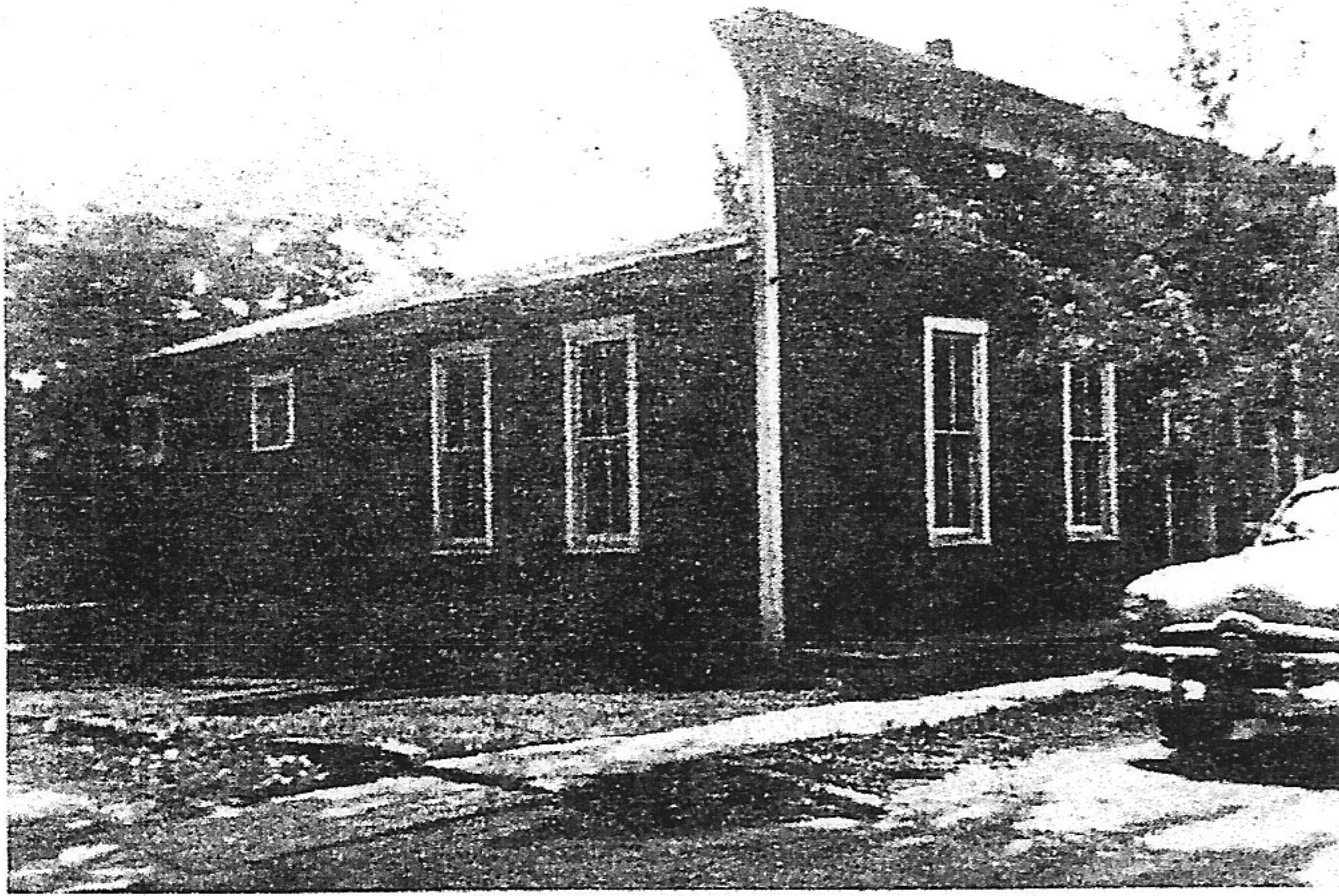
The existence of a great quantity of gravel, one hundred-fifty to one hundred-eighty feet deep, made Camden a natural center for the manufacture of concrete products. The first men to recognize the possibilities of the nearly inexhaustible and plentiful supply of gravel were John C. Snider and J. C. Love. Their industry, which was launched in 1907, was known as the Camden Concrete Works. The company manufactured cement bricks and blocks just one block north of the depot. The plant was purchased in 1935 by the late Oscar Keller, but after his death the business was bought by his son, Hugh Keller, in 1945, who still operates the plant. It now manufactures concrete tile and is known as the Concrete Pipe and Tile Company.

Charles R. Neff and Merle Fry were two other pioneers in the manufacture of concrete products in Camden. In 1916, these men organized a partnership known as the Neff and Fry Co. for the manufacture of "The Interlocking Cement Stave Silo." At that time the farm silo was the main product, but when C. Rodney Neff joined the company after World War I the company branched out with industrial bins and later to making burial vaults. This company is now owned by Don Rutten and known as Neff and Fry, Inc., but is still nationally known for its cement farm silos and cement storage bins.

The White Gravel Company located to the south of Camden, was established here in 1926 and has supplied local industries and highways with gravel for more than forty years. Several of Camden's industries are quite dependent upon this supply. Russell Ulrich was the first manager of the White Gravel Company in Camden and he continued in the same capacity until the past few months when he retired.

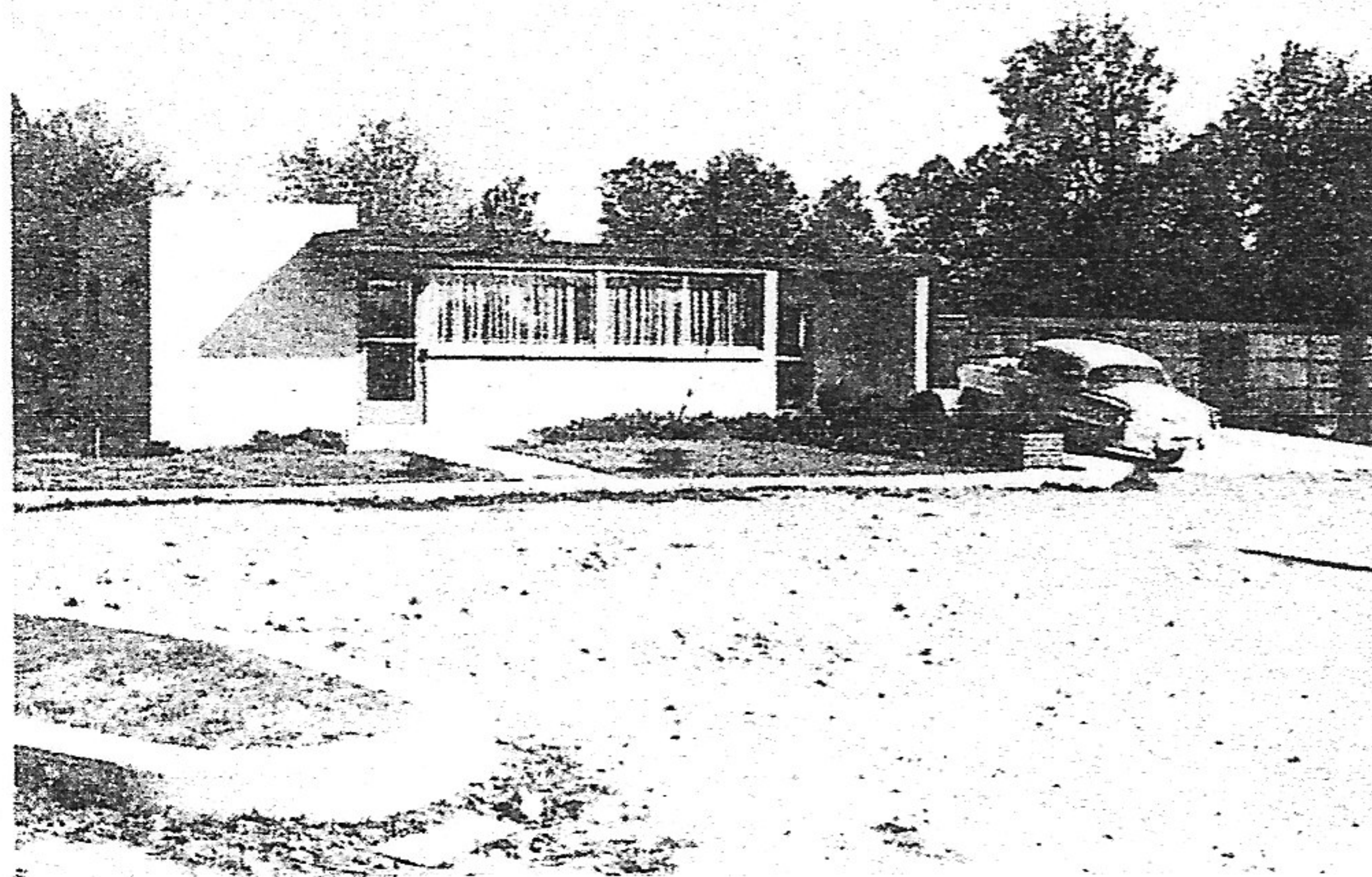
Camden Ready-Mix, another one of the industries which is very dependent upon the gravel source in this locality, was incorporated in December, 1947, and in the early part of 1948, the plant was ready for business. This plant is located very near the White Gravel Company from which it gets the gravel for the concrete for the surrounding area.

Joe H. Gwynne, on July 5, 1935, started a new industry in Camden—making special scales for hoppers known as weighing batchers for use in concrete work. During World War II, the company was associated with Wright Field Wind Tunnel Unit and manufactured special research equipment. Later they produced concrete floor and roof slabs known as Flexicore. This company moved its plant in August, 1953, from the Eikenberry Seed Store, Hendricks Street, and the McCord Building, South Main Street to its newly purchased land north of Camden along Route 227. J. H. Gwynne, Inc., continued in business until Mr. Gwynne's death on July 24, 1957. A few months later the



J. H. Gwynne, Inc. 1937-1953. This building was formerly known as the Eikenberry Seed Store. Now Camden Laundromat, E. Hendricks St.

plant was purchased by a group of Hamilton men incorporated under the name of Camden Steel Corporation. This company, steel fabricators, is one of Camden's newest industries.

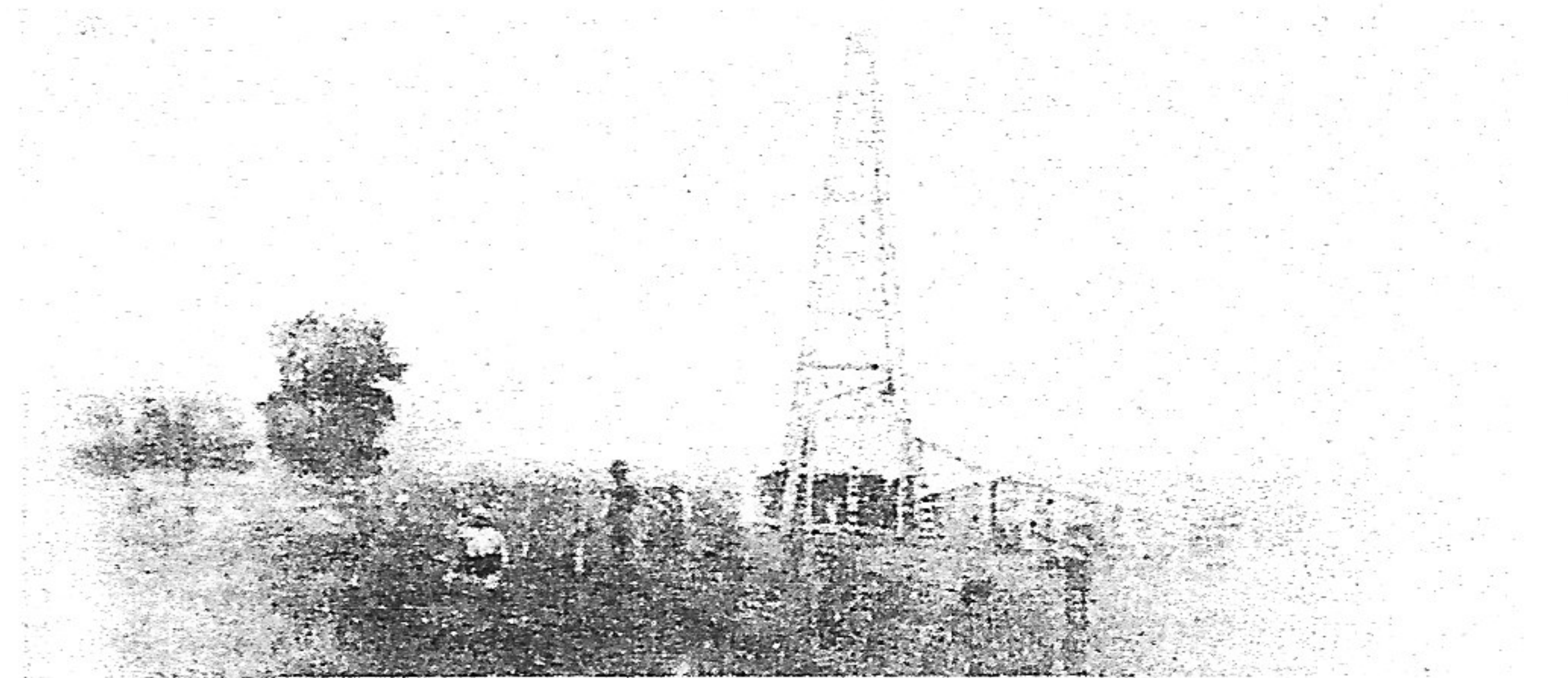


J. H. Gwynne, Inc. 1953. This building was built by J. H. Gwynne. Now Camden Steel Corp. Route 227—North

Camden's newest industry, the Universal Manufacturing Corporation—better known as Versco—came to town in 1960. Mr. Don Huber from Dayton, Ohio bought a building at the north edge of town, known as the Brownlee Borradaile Building, for the production of Prefabricated Homes. The business has steadily grown and increased until now Versco Homes are not only constructed in Ohio, but in the neighboring states of Indiana,

Kentucky, Illinois, and Tennessee. This industry is quite a boom to Camden's economic life because nearly a hundred people are employed in one capacity or another by the Universal Manufacturing Corporation.

Another convenience came to Camden when natural gas was brought to town by Dayton, Power, and Light Company. About one year after approval was given by the community and the council to bring natural gas to Camden, the gas was turned on during a ceremony held on Sept. 3, 1966. The first in town to receive natural gas was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Michael, S. Liberty Street. Since then many families and businesses have had gas piped in and meters set. Several years earlier Camdenites had visions of supplying this community with natural gas derived from this area. In 1887 three wells were drilled in Camden and gas was struck in two of these. The town immediately went into a state of celebration, but the wells did not meet the expectations of the people. It is believed gas was used here on a limited basis from 1887 to 1900 or a little later. W. E. McChristie made use of the gas for private use at the Nonpareil Building which housed his photography business. Again drilling was attempted in 1918. Three wells were drilled but only the one on the Slover property on the Creek Road produced sufficient gas to be of any value. At first it was thought this well could supply about one third of the community, but this never materialized. There was enough gas for the private use of the Slover family for a limited time. When gas was piped into Camden in 1966, it was a reminder of the dreams that



Gas well in 1918 on Slover land along Creek Road (now Free Short Pike)

*Compliments of Darrell's Plumbing & Heating — Camden
Lions Club — Camden*

had been blasted at an earlier time, but it was also a reminder that Camden was progressing.

Although one hundred-fifty years have elapsed since the first store was started to serve the village and rural community, the number of business houses and industrial plants have not increased extensively. The town has not grown into a large industrial center and still must be regarded as a

rural district. However, it has had enterprising men and women over the years who have continued their families' establishments. Others have kept abreast of the times by founding new businesses and industries which have enabled them to offer opportunities for employment to many of the local citizens.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN CAMDEN

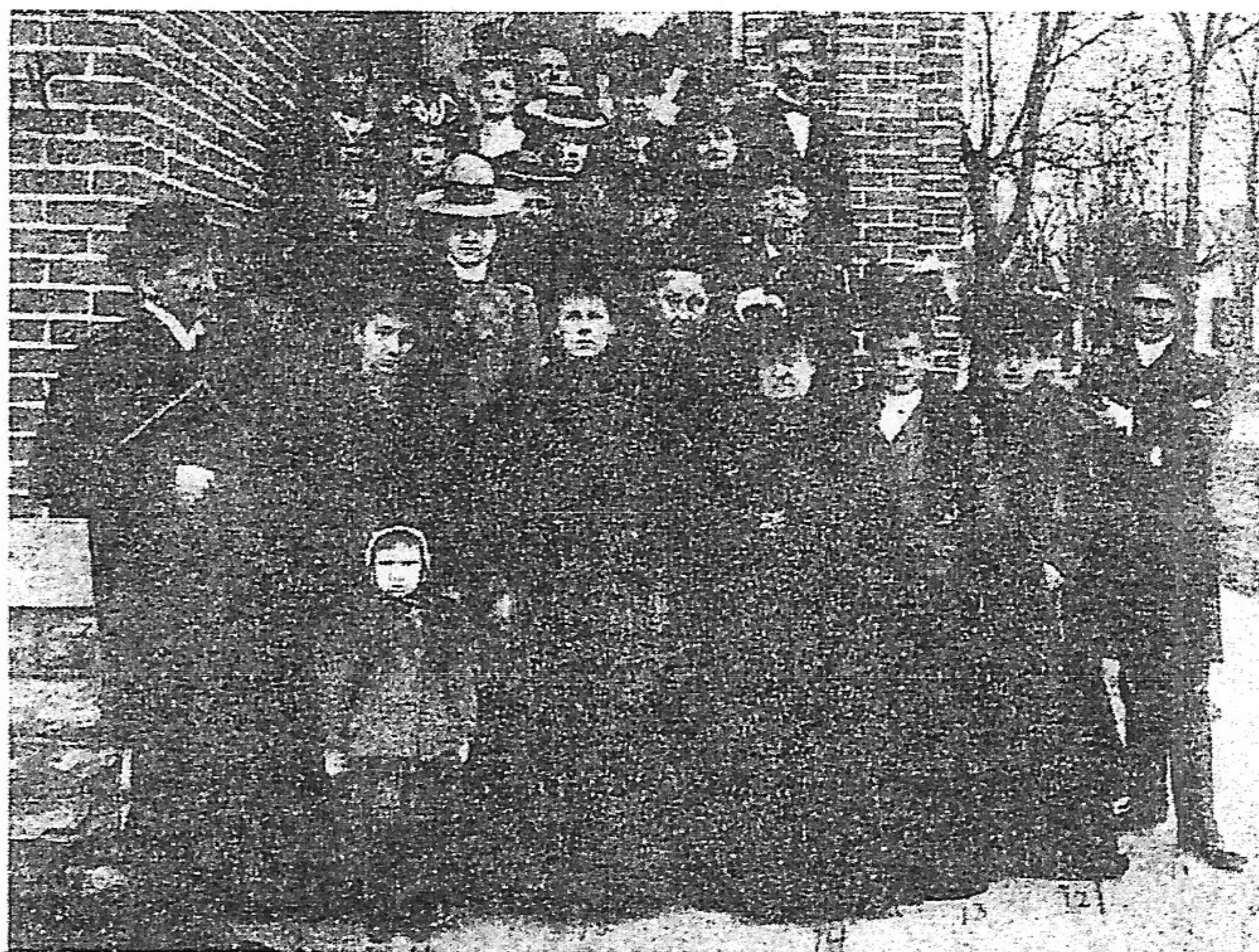
CHURCHES, CLUBS AND LODGES — 1817-1968

One of the earliest and most important influences in the lives of the Camden settlers was the church. It provided a stabilizing influence for the turbulent times. It furnished these settlers with moral, spiritual and intellectual stimuli and inspired them with confidence to face the future.

Because the Methodist theology was a little more liberal and their organization more efficient they soon became the dominant church on the frontier. Circuit riders first brought the gospel to the widely separated cabins and itinerant ministers were common in all sects, but Methodists were more systematic in their efforts. A young minister would stop at a cabin and inquire if any Methodists were in the neighborhood. After he located a few, an evening service was arranged and an organization or class was formed. Before the circuit rider left the next morning he made arrangements for another preaching sermon when he came that way again. Within a few years a thriving church with its own pastor was developed in the community.

In a similar way on May 31, 1817, Camden's first church, the Methodist Episcopal, was organized. At that time James Moore, Sr. and his wife, Mary, gave in trust a lot near the old cemetery on the west hill on which to build a place of worship for the use of the members of the church. No doubt the Camden Methodists met in various members' homes until 1825. It was in that year a church was built on the land donated by the Moores. In

1836 the congregation purchased land on the southeast corner of Hendricks and Lafayette Streets and erected a new church. This building was used until 1849 when a new one was begun. Two years later this new one was completed at a cost of \$1,200. This structure was used until the erection of the present brick building in 1888 at a cost of \$1,500. In 1956 a new addition was started to the church. It was completed a few years later and contains church school classrooms, kitchen, dining room, minister's study and a chapel. This year in 1968 a merger became final on a nationwide scale of Evangelical United Brethren and Methodist Churches and the name now is the United Methodist Church.



Methodist — 1899

Compliments of Deem's Restaurant — Camden
Fred's Auto Parts & Repair Service — Somerville
George Bros. Garage — Camden
Humble Oil & Refining Co. — Camden