



Old Furnace Stands In Silent Memory Of Worcester's Past

As if in silent tribute to their iron pioneers, a few old furnaces and forges stand today, representatives of Maryland's iron industry that dates back to Ameri-

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There were one or two others. There was one resident more pretentious than any other at Furnace Hill which was known as the "Mansion

as the "Boarding House." This house, too, was large and well-built; but, of course, it did not compare with the Mansion House in magnificence.

It had many bedrooms of fair size, a spacious kitchen equipped with a very large fireplace having a swinging crane and a built-in brick oven capable of baking at one time two hundred loaves.

A small crudely built church known as the "Shingled Meeting-House" because it was shingled all round as well as the roof

erations in America.

It is probable that the hot-blast equipment was added late in the life of the furnace, but Nassawango still qualifies as an early example of hot-blast technology.

Lately, there has been renewed interest in restoring the old furnace. Restoration was attempted once by the Worcester County Historical Society, but vandals destroyed much of the work that had been done. The furnace site has been allowed to become overgrown in an attempt to discourage vandals from going back to the furnace.

The Historical Society now envisages a restoration that will recreate life as it was at the furnace during its heyday, with a full time caretaker living at the site, and numerous buildings reconstructed with craftsmen operating as they did in the 1800's and an authentic farm operation.

The Snow Hill Rotary Club has dedicated several fund-raising ventures towards this project, in hopes that it can generate additional interest in restoring the historic furnace.

"We think that a working village that shows a true picture of life at the furnace in the 1800's could become a very important tourist attraction in Worcester County," said George Monroe, County Extension Agent and one of the prime movers behind the restoration attempts.

"It is an idea that has had a lot of success in other areas, and with the great interest in history that has resulted from the Bicentennial, there would be a lot of interest in the Nassawango Furnace," Monroe said.

Visiting the Old Furnace today is like stepping into the past. The chain link fence surrounding it is so overgrown that it looks like a natural barrier.

The forest surrounds the furnace now, and is slowly creeping back to reclaim it. Except for the massive brick furnace and the dirt logging

tracks, the hand of man is not to be seen. The noise of cars passing on Old Furnace Road is muffled by the forest, and the only evidence of their passing is the clatter of the heavy bridge timbers over Nassawango Creek, much like the sound the bridge would have made under the strain of horse-drawn wagons.

Part of the earthen ramp that was used to cart the bog

off. By 1736, the quantity of iron shipped to England from Principio's Maryland and Virginia plants totaled nearly 90 percent of the colonial total.

Principio Furnace was Maryland's first iron furnace and industrial enterprise, and the plant had a furnace, a forge with two refineries and one chafery, a store, gristmill and a blacksmith shop.

Today, within a quarter-mile of Principio Creek's present course, located in Maryland's northeast corner, the furnace stands in ruins. The remaining stone furnace stack was probably erected in 1837 by George P. Whitaker and Company, after the plant was sold to the Whitaker and Berrett families in 1836.

These furnace remains were once a water-powered, hot-blast furnace, and the water turbine, blowing engine, power transmission gear and hot air oven are essentially intact. Also remaining are a dam, and several wood, brick and stone building foundations.

The Whitaker and Berrett families expanded and improved the plant, converting to a hot-blast operation. The Whitaker Iron Company, as it was known, could produce 800 tons of pig iron in 37 weeks. In 1891, however, the last pig iron was poured at the Principio site.

Located 12 miles north of Frederick, Catoctin Furnace is a large site, with three major parts: the furnace area, the adjacent village of Catoctin Furnace and the ore pits and water power developments along Catoctin Mountain's east base.

Although records indicate furnace operations by 1780, little is known of Catoctin's early history. During the 18th century, Catoctin was operated in conjunction with other iron enterprises. After a change of owners, Catoctin's original stack was rebuilt and enlarged in 1831, and during this time, the furnace's major output was hollow ware and stoves.

Catoctin changed hands again in 1848 and the town of Catoctin Furnace was laid out. A second furnace, a charcoal-burning, cold-blast model, was built and in 1858 both furnaces were outfitted with steam-powered vertical, direct action blowing engines. The most advanced furnace was built in 1873, an anthracite coal-burning, hot-blast



Nassawango Creek, which once served as transportation for the pig iron produced in the furnace reflects the forest that has reclaimed civilization's encroachments.

At Middle School

S. H. Students Learn Small Appliance Use

Saving electrical energy and better use of small appliances were demonstrated on Tuesday, April 27th, in the Snow Hill Middle School Home Economic Department

by Mrs. Barbara Trader, Home Economist of Delmarva Power Company.

Mrs. Trader showed the students that the blender was a fast and efficient appliance

to use for mixing bread and cake batters, in addition to using for mixing drinks and pureeing foods.

The girls learned how microwaves cooked food, and the advantages and disadvantages of the microwave oven. A hamburger and macaroni

with meat, bacon and green beans were prepared to demonstrate the use and speed of the microwave oven.

The girls found that the high dome electric fry pan could be used for baking, broiling and stewing, as well as for frying a fraction of the cost of using the conventional stove oven and burners.

Mrs. Trader brought several of the new

May Fellowship Meeting Set By Church Women

The May Fellowship meeting promoted by the Church Women United will be held at 9:30 in the First Baptist Church, near Princess Anne, Md. The Church is located off Route 13, turn right (going south) at blinking light on Route 362, drive to Crisfield land and turn left. The brick Church is near the Civic Center. The theme of

Drive should be packed by each Church in sturdy cartons and tied with strong cord before delivering by May to the Collection Center in your County. Needed is all kinds of clothing, soap, towels, sheets, pillow cases, Health Kits, School Kits and Sewing Kits. Church World Service also asks for ten cents per pound to help with

As if in silent tribute to their iron pioneers, a few old furnaces and forges stand today, representatives of Maryland's iron industry that dates back to America's colonial era.

Her master craftsmen helped forge an industrial tradition for a country whose steel and iron industry would someday supply the world.

Three sites of historical significance, where people may go to learn more about those earlier days, are: Principio Furnace, Catocin and Nassawango Furnaces. Anyone living on the Eastern Shore near Snow Hill between 1830 and 1849 had every right to brag about Nassawango Furnace. One of a very few iron-making enterprises on the Eastern Shore --- Maryland's only furnace depending primarily on bog ore -- Nassawango was of substantial local importance during its operation.

There is not much to be seen today, however. What remains on Nassawango Creek's south bank is a significant survival of the 19th century iron industry. The furnace stack, in unusually fine condition, stands with much of its integral hot-blast apparatus intact.

Erected in 1830 by Mark Richards of the Maryland Iron Company, Nassawango Furnace smelted iron from local bog ore formations. During the 1830's and into the 1840's, the furnace produced as much as 700 tons of iron each year.

Nassawango operated until 1849, and was reported to be in dilapidated condition by 1859, but the furnace was successful enough to generate the development of a small village.

The village lay in the form of a large U with streets on the three enclosed sides. On each side of these three streets were houses, cottages or homes of workers in the furnace and of the charcoal burners; also there were shops for supplying the needs of the villagers and others nearby; perhaps there were more than fifty homes in all.

The inside of this large square furnished plenty of ground for vegetable gar-

dens for the homes lying adjacent; the homes on other sides of the streets had garden spots on that side of the streets.

There was one large general store and there were several smaller shops, a shoemaker's shop where shoes were made for each member of the family, a blacksmith's shop and a wheelwright's shop, and perhaps one or two others.

There was one resident more pretentious than any other at Furnace Hill which was known as the "Mansion House". It was impressively built in old Colonial style with broad verandas and a portico above supported by heavy iron columns. It had large parlors, lofty ceilings, and sufficient rooms for many guests and for grand parties.

The next most imposing and most important house in the village was that known

as the "Boarding House." This house, too, was large and well-built; but, of course, it did not compare with the Mansion House in magnificence.

It had many bedrooms of fair size, a spacious kitchen equipped with a very large fireplace having a swinging crane and a built-in brick oven capable of baking at one time two hundred loaves.

A small crudely built church known as the "Shingled Meeting-House" because it was shingled all round as well as the roof, stood in an oak grove at the edge of the village.

Nassawango's most significant feature is that it employed hot-blast techniques shortly after the idea was developed in England in 1828. If the furnace was built with hot-blast gear initially it would have been one of the first hot-blast op-

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Part of the earthen ramp that was used to cart the bog ore to the top of the furnace still stands, its original purpose masked by the heavy undergrowth.

The furnace is quiet now, and its hearths are cold, but lurking beneath its scarred brick exterior, the cries of the long-dead hearth workers and the heat of the hot blast stir reminders of Nassawango Furnace's past.

Thinking the colonies might be a profitable source of revenue, an English group of well-to-do ironmasters and merchants formed the Principio Company to explore the matter. In 1723 it sent John England as its representative.

The company's hunch paid

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Used good clothing and blankets for the Church World Service Clothing

Drive should be packed by each Church in sturdy cartons and tied with strong cord before delivering by May to the Collection Center in your County. Needed is all kinds of clothing, soap, towels, sheets, pillowcases, Health Kits, School Kits and Sewing Kits. Church World Service also asks for ten cents per pound to help with processing and shipping. This should be sent to Church World Service Clothing Appeal, P.O. Box 220, Elkhart, Indiana, 46514, giving the name of your Church. More information will be given at the May Fellowship. Somerset County Collection Center is The Greenhill Church of the Brethren, near Westover; Wicomico Center is Bethesda United Methodist Church, Salisbury and Worcester County Center is the Whatcoat United Methodist Church, Snow Hill, Md.

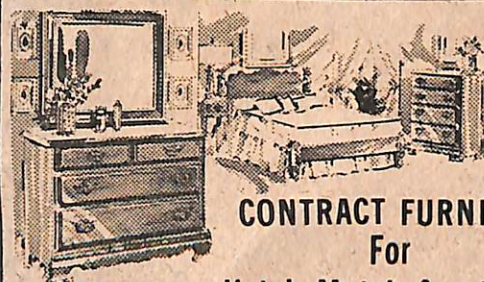
The girls learned to crowd waves cooked food, and the advantages and disadvantages of the microwave oven. A ham, turkey and macaroni casserole, bacon and gingerbread were prepared to demonstrate the use and speed of the microwave oven.

The girls found that the high dome electric fry pan could be used for baking, broiling and stewing, as well as for frying at a fraction of the cost of using the conventional stove oven and burners.

Mrs. Trader brought in several of the popular crock pots. She discussed their construction in relation to the amount of electrical current used by each and the amount of attention required during cooking. Each girl sampled the foods that were prepared during the demonstration.



The old hearths are cold now, but you can sense the power of the hot blast that reduced the bog ore to iron in the 1800's.



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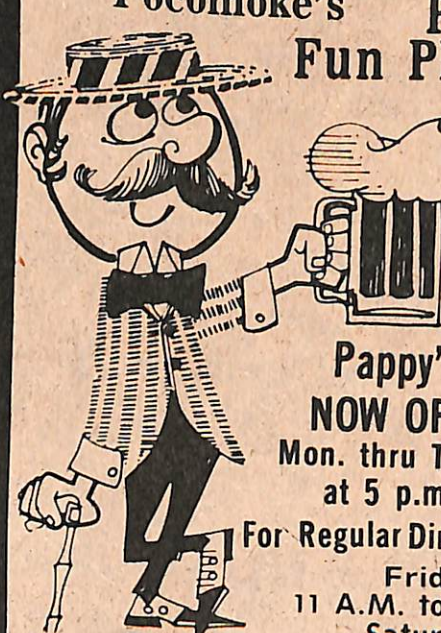
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