

G-V-A-090

late 19th century

Wilson Survey District

Wilson

Multiple, Private

The village of Wilson grew up around a lumber business started by George W. Wilson in the late 1860's. The business and the small community expanded after 1882 when the West Virginia Central and Pittsburgh Railway was completed through profitable. The district consists of ten frame buildings clustered around the Potomac River in Maryland and West Virginia. Six dwellings and three offices or shops are situated in Maryland, while a large general store stands in West Virginia in front of the railroad tracks.

By 1900 the local timber stand was nearly exhausted, so the company moved its operations to Fairfax, West Virginia and then several other areas before closing down, around 1915.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Wilson

AND/OR COMMON

Wilson Survey District

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Old Wilson Rd. at North Branch Potomac River

CITY, TOWN

Wilson

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

6th

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Garrett County

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple ownership

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Garrett County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

Third and Alder Streets

CITY, TOWN

Oakland

STATE

Maryland 21550

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

G-V-A-000

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Wilson Survey District is a group of ten buildings located at the east end of Old Wilson Road, on both the Maryland and West Virginia sides of the North Branch Potomac River. The Western Maryland Railroad passes through the eastern edge of the district following the path of the river on the West Virginia side. Within this small settled area the terrain is flat, but beyond it the land rises sharply on either side of Old Wilson Road.

On the Maryland side of the river the district is composed of six dwellings and three small auxilliary buildings. In West Virginia, just across the modern steel and concrete bridge that connects the two sides, a general store is situated between the river and the railroad tracks.

Four of the dwellings are very similar. Basically, they are the frame, two story, gable-roofed, rectangular plan that is very common throughout the county. The other two dwellings, also frame, are more irregular. Both are characterized by two story, bay window projections on their facades, with side wings extending from it. Of the three auxilliary buildings, one appears to have been a small store or office. It is simply a one story, gable end facade, frame structure with a recessed door flanked by elongated 1/1 sash windows. The use of the other two buildings - single story, gable-roofed, frame structures - is unknown.

The general store is a two story, gable-roofed, vertical plank structure on a stone foundation. Its gable end facade is characterized by a pedimented gable and a glazed store front with a pair of recessed doors.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The origin of the village of Wilson can be traced back directly to George W. Wilson, its namesake, who first settled in this area and gradually built up a lumber business.

George Wilson made his home on this site in 1860, and had started a business manufacturing barrell staves by the late 1860's. He transported his goods by wagon to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Station in Oakland, ten miles distant, in order to market it. In 1882, the West Virginia Central and Pittsburgh Railway was extended to the village of Wilson. Seeing this as an excellent opportunity to expand his business, Mr. Wilson built a large circular sawmill on the Maryland side of the river.¹ A shingle mill was later erected on the West Virginia side. The business offices for the Wilson Lumber Company, the lumber yard, the train depot, and the general store were all located in West Virginia, while the majority of the houses were in Maryland.²

George Wilson died in 1884, leaving his three sons to continue the business. By 1900 the local timber stand was nearly exhausted, so the brothers looked for new areas to harvest. In the years to come they had operations at Fairfax, Beverly, Mill Creek, and Bernardstown, West Virginia. Circa 1915 the Wilson Lumber Company ceased operations, however, the Wilsons went on to start and manage other lumber companies.³

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- ¹ Benjamin F. G. Kline, Jr. Tall Pines and Winding Rivers, 1976, p. 79.
- ² Merritt Wilson, Jr. The Wilson Family. (Athens, Ohio: Lawhead Press, 1971), p. 305, 306.
- ³ Kline, p. 79, 81.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

Overlapping boundaries:

West Virginia, Grant County

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	COUNTY
STATE	COUNTY

STATE	COUNTY
-------	--------

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Valerie Cesna, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust/Bureau of Mines

DATE

1981

STREET & NUMBER

Shaw House, 21 State Circle

TELEPHONE

(301) 269-2438

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

STATE

Maryland 21401

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

for George Washington Wilson; and also Sarah Wilson (457) and Noah Harvey, parents of the female counterpart to be discussed in the present chapter; their descendants except for George Washington and Sarah Harvey Wilson. This chapter, then, is the final one in which a particular couple will be reviewed, that of George Washington (5139) and Eliza Harvey (5148) Wilson. The succeeding and final chapter will concern all of their descendants as we know them.

George Washington Wilson (5139) was born at the old Wilson Homestead on Short Run, near Kitzmiller, Allegany (now Garrett) County, Maryland, on September 4, 1836, the third child of James (455) and Lucinda Junkins Wilson. Eliza Harvey (5148) was born about 10 months later, July 27, 1837, the second child of George's aunt, Sarah Wilson (457) and Noah Harvey.

This was the most tranquil period in the nation's history, being 60 years after the Revolution and 25 years prior to the Civil War, in which they were to become involved.

George Wilson's boyhood was not unlike that of other youngsters of his generation who were born on the farms of Western Maryland. There was the customary country school education and the everyday chores around home. There was time for fun but little of it came in any organized form; it came from the daily chores and from Nature's playground. Like others before him and like neighbor boys of his day, he enjoyed hunting and fishing. This story, handed down through the years, reflects on his youthful enthusiasm:

Once he went to bed earlier than usual, planning to get up early to go hunting. During the night, half asleep, he noticed it was rather bright outside, so got up, dressed, and went to the woods. He killed three deer before noticing that the sun was rising and he realized that he had been hunting with a full moon.¹

Burton Wilson (6264), who contributed much to this history, related an interesting "all work and no play" incident of those earlier years which could be expected in a similar situation today. In a letter he wrote on March 10, 1961, were these observations:

Your grandfather George from a boy up was very energetic, fearless, and had a good sense of humor. One day during harvest they had finished a stack of hay and were getting ready to put in the sticks used to hold the top on. Lash McCrobie, an Irishman, who worked for them, was pulling the hay from around the bottom of the stack. Uncle George was sitting off about ten feet sharpening the sticks. When Lash got around to Uncle George all stooped over, George couldn't resist giving him a swift prod with the sharpened stick. Lash whirled around, saw George laughing, jumped on him while he was down and gave him an awful beating. Of course that was fun for the crew and humiliation for George, who was only a good sized boy but felt big. So to get even he made it up with his brother Bill (5138) to waylay Lash as he went home that night. When Lash came along, George stepped out and said, "You jumped on me when I was down. Now I am up and am going to show you what a good thrashing feels like." Lash, knowing he had a fight, went into George like a whirlwind, knocked him down and started beating him up. Bill picked up a rock, threw straight and hit Lash on the head. That distracted his attention long enough for George to flip him over and give him a good thrashing. On the way home Bill and George got into an argument. George boasted how he had trimmed Lash. Bill said "No. He was licking the tar out of you until I hit him with the rock. I am the one who licked him." To settle the argument they fought and George came out victor.²

Burton Wilson continued his letter with these comments:

You no doubt have heard that story before. Anyway, I think it is a good one and points up the thinking of the men of that day. They went in for feats of strength, endurance, and all manly traits such as running, jumping, lifting, wrestling, outchopping, outmowing, outdoing anybody else, even if they did work like brutes.³

LAND OF CANAAN

There were streams and forests near the Wilson home, but annual trips were made to the not-too-distant Canaan Valley and the Blackwater Fork of Cheat River with its great falls. Here, in what now is West Virginia, were the untouched wilderness and the broad expanse of land which tradition tells us was first discovered by a Bible-toting bear-hunter and explorer by the name of George Casey Harness, sometime around the year 1753. The breathtaking beauty of the wild valley so impressed young Harness that he involuntarily cried out—"BEHOLD! THE LAND OF CANAAN!"

It was of this Land of Canaan that Philip Pendleton Kennedy wrote so fluently as early as 1851 for *Harper's Magazine* and whose writings were humorously illustrated by David Hunter Strother under the pen name of "Porte Crayon."⁴

It is not known if George W. Wilson and Porte Crayon became acquainted during those days of enjoying expeditions to the Land of Canaan or Blackwater Falls, but their paths of life met when the Civil War erupted and the 3rd West Virginia Cavalry was organized at Camp Wiley, near Wheeling, W. Va., in the Spring of 1863. Lieutenant-Colonel David H. Strother was in charge of the outfit and George Washington Wilson (5139) was a private in the same company.

Almost five years before that enlistment day, on October 7, 1858, at the age of 22 years, George Washington Wilson (5139) married Eliza Harvey (5148), a daughter of Noah Harvey (1811-1888) and Sarah Wilson Harvey (1809-1884). She was born in the White Church area of Ryans Glades, near Kitzmiller, Maryland, on July 15, 1837, and was 21 years old when she married. Eliza Harvey's mother, Sarah (457), was a daughter of George's grandfather Thomas Wilson III (328), thus Eliza (5148), and George (5139), were

first cousins. The involved Wilson-Harvey marriages explained further in Chapter Five and Seven.

The above paragraph presents the formal facts on this marriage, but there is more to be written about the event.

October 7, 1858, was the correct date set for Eliza's marriage, but the groom was to have been another man whose name has been lost with time; all that is known was that Eliza's original bridegroom was not to have been George Washington Wilson. Eliza's parents had made elaborate preparations for the event because they liked their prospective son-in-law; but the Wilson boys didn't. The preacher was in the Harvey's living room, the guests were there partaking of pre-wedding goodies, and the bride-to-be was nervously and anxiously pacing her bedroom floor.

Apparently unbeknown to the majority present, George Washington Wilson drove up in a horse-drawn rig, hitched it at a side gate, climbed up a ladder and "kidnapped" Eliza, the bride-to-be. Having escorted her down the ladder to the ground and then to the buggy, he returned to the house, gathered up the wedding cake, and, without hesitation or interference, the young couple headed for Westernport, Maryland, where they were married by a Rev. Mr. McClure.

No information has been handed down as to what became of the cake, but certainly there was a tense atmosphere of mixed feelings back at the Harvey home. And, to Shakespeare's, "All's well that ends well," can be added the customary "They lived happily ever after."

As previously noted, George's father, James Wilson (455), had bought or helped to buy land for his two oldest sons. William (5138) had received land located near Gormanania, and George's land was a few miles farther upstream on the North Fork of the Potomac River at what is now known as "Wilson." Both farms were in Maryland.

During the course of his life, George W. Wilson bought

many parcels of land in Western Maryland and West Virginia, both before and after the Civil War. A deed recorded in the Allegany (Maryland) County Court House reveals a purchase of 134 acres made from Daniel E. Offutt for \$600.00. The land was described as:

... all of a certain piece or part of a tract of land called Elk Garden lying and being in Allegany County [now Garrett County] and State of Maryland on the head drains of the North Branch of the Potomac River.⁵

The parcel of land was bought on March 18, 1862, when George was 25 years of age and just six months prior to his enlistment into the Union Army.

FIRST HOME AND SAWMILL

Following George's (5139) marriage to Eliza Harvey (5148), he built a house at the foot of Conaway Hill along Sand Run Road where it forks with a road to what is called "Red Oak." It was at this time, when George set up a small circular sawmill to cut out his house pattern, that he got his first taste of a lumber business which extended into subsequent generations.

The house at the foot of Conaway Hill was home from the time of their marriage until after the Civil War, although nobody lived there much during George's enlistment period from Sept. 15, 1862, until Feb. 19, 1865.

Those years of war were especially difficult for Eliza who, having lost her first-born child, Laura Eugenia, by death on Jan. 15, 1861, at the age of only sixteen months, had to care for and protect their first baby son, Daniel Webster Wilson, born Nov. 29, 1861. Even before George enlisted in the Union Army, the young couple and baby were harrassed at night by adversaries. Knowing of his loyalty to the Northern cause, Southern sympathizers frequently attempted to have

George appear on the porch, perhaps to intimidate or shoot him.

Most of the harrassment probably took place following an exciting experience which happened to George one day when he was on his way home, traveling horseback on the Northwestern Turnpike (now U.S. Route 50). The famous old turnpike, one of the first to traverse the country from the East to the Ohio River, went within two or three miles of his home. As he rounded a bend in the road, he saw four be-draggled men in grey uniforms in front of him.

George had heard of the death of Confederate General Robert S. Garrett at Corrick's Ford, Tucker County, West Virginia, on July 14, 1861, and the defeat of his force, which retreated in a rout hoping to reach the South Branch of the Potomac River. These four soldiers, he presumed, were in retreat from that battle, but he did not know what to do. With courage or not and with little time for decision, George took them as captives and marched them to his home. As can be surmised, his problems had only begun. He fed them and as they rested, George hoped for relief from Union soldiers who might be following, but none came. To take them to Red House, near the county seat of Oakland, and turn them in to Union authorities was not practical, so he marched them back to the turnpike and turned them loose.

JOINING THE UNION ARMY

It was only two months later when George W. Wilson joined the Union Army at Camp Wiley, near Wheeling, West Virginia. Following his departure and enlistment, the molestings continued at home causing Eliza, in fear, to move back to her parents' home. There, except for occasional visits to her own house, she remained throughout the war.

The first land battle of the Civil War had taken place on June 3, 1861, at Philippi, West Virginia, and was followed

G-V-A-090

by the Corrick's Ford debacle on July 14, before Marylanders in any substantial numbers took up arms. Since Maryland was a border state and usually considered as one belonging to the South, many of its citizens joined the Confederate Army while others, probably in equal numbers entered the cause of the North. Apparently most of the Wilsons, Harveys, and allied families favored the Union and George Washington Wilson was one of them.

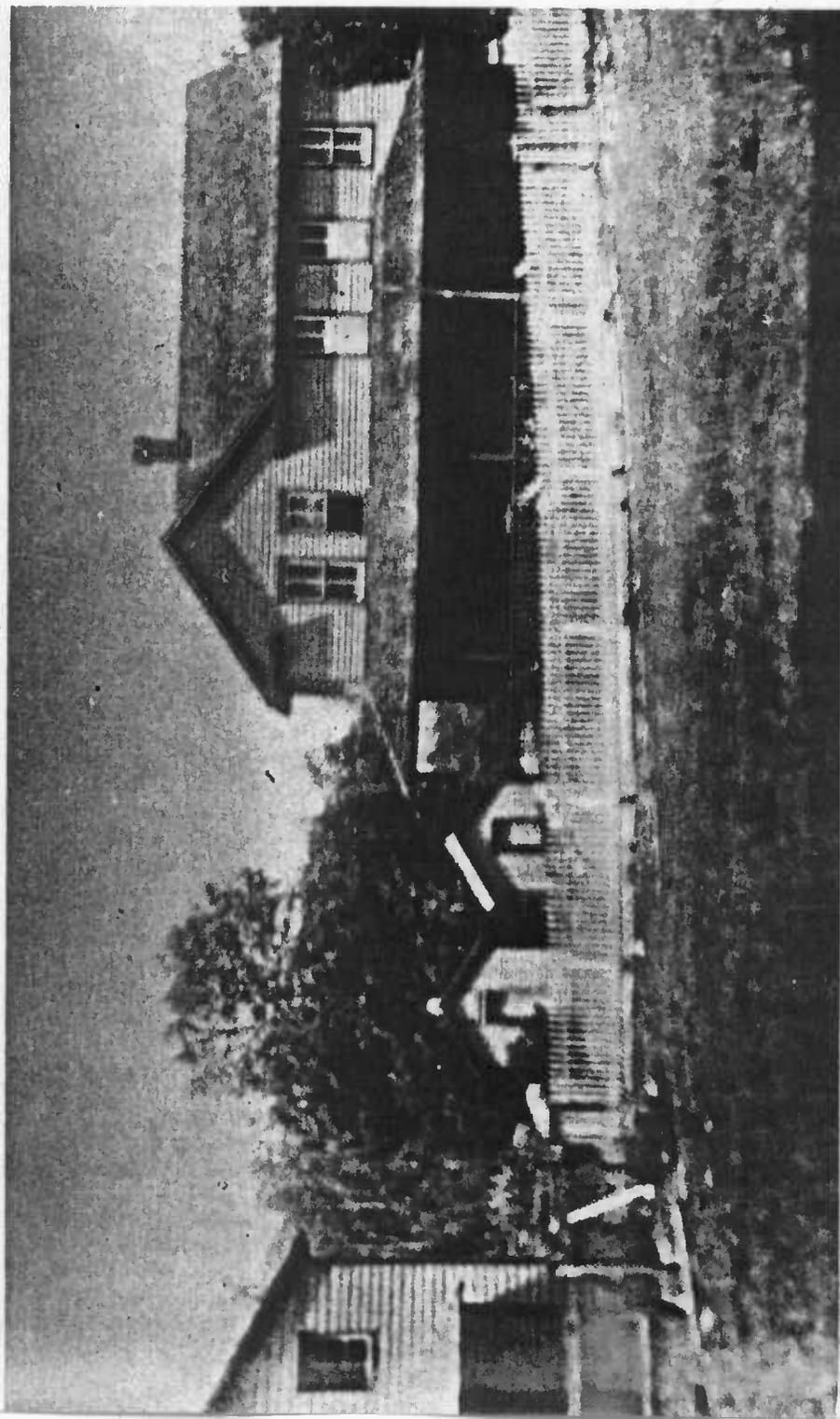
In order to facilitate the reader's ability to understand George W. Wilson's activities during the Civil War, his entire service record is documented here rather than at the end of this chapter.

A report from the Adjutant General's office of the War Department dated Aug. 12, 1880, reveals the following service record of George W. Wilson:

George W. Wilson enrolled on the 15th of September, 1862 at Oakland (Md.) in Company "B" 3rd West Va. cavalry volunteers to serve 3 years or during the war, and mustered into service as a private on the 24th of October, 1862, at Camp Willey near Wheeling, in Company "B" — 3rd Regiment of West Virginia cavalry volunteers to serve 3 years, or during the war.

On the muster roll of Company "B" of that regiment, for the 6 months ending June 30, 1864, dated June 30, 1864, he is reported 1st. Sergeant absent in hospital at Charleston, W. Va., since July 3. July, August, September and October (4 months muster) 1864 present for duty. (Record of events on roll to June 30, 1864, shows . . . arrived there (Salem) June 21st. at daylight; 3 miles West of Salem, Lt. Johnson with 40 men made a dash to the Rebs; Lt. Johnson was killed in the charge, one sergeant wounded slightly . . . the company arrived at Charleston June 30, 1864) (all the other sergeants are reported present).

Regimental returns for June, July and August 1864 report him absent in hospital, Charleston, W. Va. July 1, 1864. He was discharged to accept promotion to 1st. lieutenant same company and regiment to date from February 19, 1865, per



G-V-A-090

Old home place near Wilson, Maryland. (Built by George Washington Wilson when he returned from Civil War)

S.O. No. 7, Par. 2, Headquarters Cavalry Corps, Department of Washington, May 31, 1865.

Record on file in this office fail to show wound, June 21, 1864 on retreat from Lynchburg, Va., as alleged.

*(signed) H.C. Ceshin
Assistant Adjutant General⁶*

The same office, upon a request for additional information by the Department of Interior, on May 15, 1909, provided the following information:

George W. Wilson, Company "E", 3rd Regiment, Virginia Cavalry, age 26 — present on rolls from M.I. to February 29, 1864, except roll dated Nov. 1, 1862 shows him absent with leave — present on roll Dec. 31, 1864.

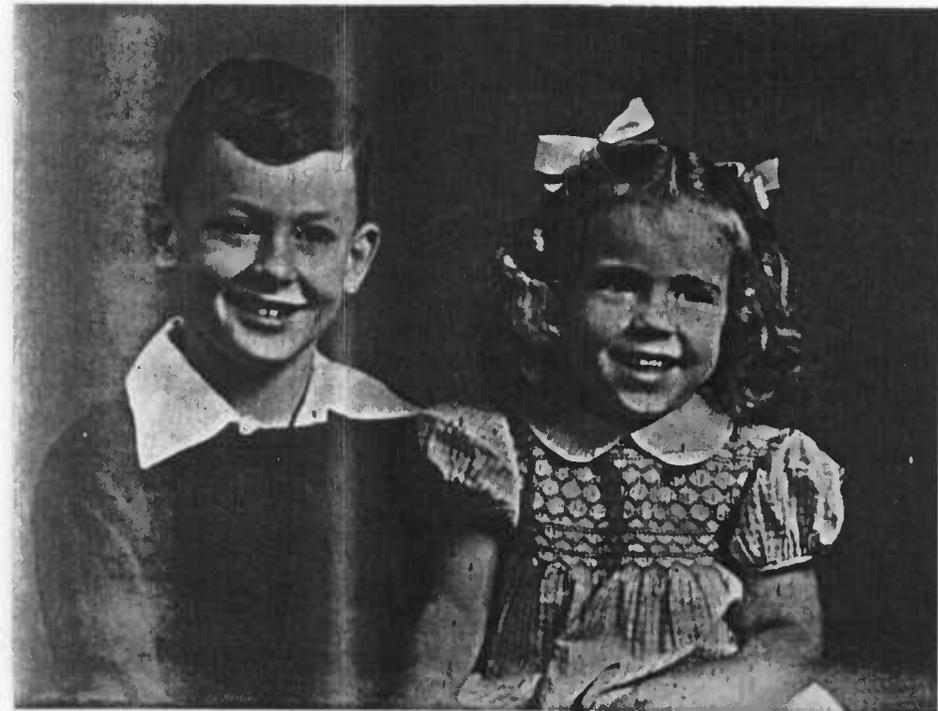
Company E, 3rd Virginia Cavalry, became January or February 1864, Company E, 3rd W. Va. Cavalry, which became Company "B", same Regiment between February 29, and June 30, 1864.

Medical records indexed (or discovered) since the statement of Dec. 17, 1880 were made to show the following information: Treated March 23 to 28, 1863 and March 28th to [date indistinguishable from record] constipation; July 13 & 14, 1864, gunshot wound left thigh flesh midway between knee and hip joint, furloughed July 24, 1864.⁷

The two above official reports were forthcoming apparently after George W. Wilson, on June 17, 1879, appeared before the Garrett County (Maryland) Circuit Court as required when applying for a pension. His declaration stated:

. . . that he was enrolled on the 15th of September, 1862 in Company "B" of the 3rd regiment of W. Va. cavalry commanded by Chas. W. White, and was honorably discharged at Wheeling on or about the 7th day of July, 1865; that his personal description is as follows: Age 42 years; height, 5 feet 10 inches, complexion, fair; that his hair, dark; eyes, gray. That while a member of the organization aforesaid, in the service and in the line of his duty near Salem, in the State of Virginia on or about the 21st day of June, 1864, he received a gunshot wound in the left thigh severing the muscle in front

G-V-A-090



author and his family, Merritt, Jr., and Caroline Brady Wilson. Merritt

of the bone. That he was treated in hospitals as follows: at Charleston, W. Va., and Gallipolis, Ohio. That his occupation had been that of a farmer; that he is now partially disabled.⁸

The above documented reports give considerable information about George W. Wilson's service record. Likewise, there is obliging data relating to his physical characteristics and features. However, they do not disclose much about the many personal experiences George had during his three years of war.

George W. Wilson always was proud of his record as a soldier and was especially pleased with having served considerable time under the command of General William A. Averell. Inasmuch as Averell's cavalry was a fast-moving and very active unit of the Northern forces, there were times when Pvt. Wilson found himself close to his own backyard and possibly there were brief visits to his home.

Just when Pvt. Wilson began serving under General Averell is not known. However, it probably was in May, 1863, when Averell took over the command of General B. S. Roberts, who had been relieved of his duties because he offered so little opposition to the advance of Generals Jones and Imboden. According to Hugh Maxwell's *History of Randolph County*.

When Imboden crossed the mountains and took Beverly (West Virginia), the War Department at Washington urged General Roberts to collect his forces and fight. To this General Roberts replied that the roads were so bad he could not move his troops. The answer from Washington was sarcastic, asking why the roads were too bad for him and yet good enough to enable the rebels to move with considerable rapidity.

When General Averell took command he changed 3000 infantry to cavalry, and trained it to the highest proficiency, and with it did some of the finest fighting of the war. The Confederates feared him and moved in his vicinity with the greatest caution.

General Averell urged that the mass of mountain forming the great rampart overlooking the Valley of Virginia should be

fortified and held. He referred to the Allegany, Cheat mountain, Rich mountain and others about the sources of the Greenbrier, Cheat, Tygart and Elk rivers.⁹

In the process of establishing this broad front, Averell had attacked and routed the Confederates at Huttonsville. Next, Averell's cavalry defeated General Bradley T. Johnson's forces near Martinsburg following a fast trip from Beverly. Here he was opposing the Western wing of General Lee's Army retreating from Gettysburg.

Maxwell's history relates:

General Averell moved to Winchester through Hardy County on his expedition to Greenbrier county. At the battle of Rocky Gap, in Greenbrier county, Averell with 1300 men fought General Sam Jones with over 2000. The battle continued two days, when Averell's ammunition ran short and he retreated to Beverly. His loss in the battle was 218, the Confederates loss 162. This was one of the most hotly contested battles in West Virginia.¹⁰

Averell's victory at Droop Mountain, Pocahontas County was followed a month later by his great Salem, Virginia, raid which he concluded on Christmas Day, 1863. General Averell had been ordered to cut the railroad between Richmond and Knoxville, which passed through Salem. According to Maxwell, Averell was ordered to cut this road "no matter what the result to his army. He must do it, even if he lost every man he had in the execution of his work."

Averell had 2500 cavalry and artillery. It was a momentous issue. Union General Burnside was besieged at Knoxville, Tennessee, by General Longstreet, and it was feared that no reinforcements could reach Burnside in time to save him. The only hope lay in cutting Longstreet's line of supply. Hu Maxwell continued:

With his veteran cavalry, mostly West Virginians, and equal to the best the world ever saw, Averell left Keyser Decem-

G-V-A-090

ber 8, 1863 and moved through Petersburg, Monterey, Back Creek, Gatewood's, Sweet Sulphur Springs valley and New Castle to Salem. Four Confederate armies, any of them larger than his, lay between him and Salem, and to the number of 12,000 they marched, counter-marched, and maneuvered to effect his capture.¹¹

But after eight days of the most difficult travel by night and day, on December 16, he struck Salem, and the blow was felt throughout the Southern Confederacy.

Confederate forces were not too far away and Averell's men lost no time in cutting the telegraph wires and destroying the railroad and bridges. The destruction was complete. They burned 100,000 bushels of oats; 1,000 sacks of salt; 100 wagons; large quantities of clothing, leather, cotton, harness, shoes, bridge-timber, trestles, ties, and everything that would burn, even twisting the rails, up and down the railroad sixteen miles.

Maxwell's history continues:

At 4 P.M., December 16, Averell set out upon his return. He led his bedraggled and tired men on a rapid return to Beverly, with Confederate troops hurrying from all sides to cut him off. Rain fell in torrents. Streams overflowed their banks and deluged the country. The cavalry swam, and the cannon and caissons were hauled across by ropes where horses could not ford. The Federals fought their way to James River, crossed it on bridges which they burned in the face of the Confederates, and crossed the Alleghanies into Pocahontas county by a road almost unknown. More than 100 men were lost by capture and drowning at James River. The rains had changed to snow, and the cold was so intense that cattle froze to death in the fields. Such a storm had seldom or never been seen in the Alleghanies. The soldiers' feet froze till they could not wear boots. They wrapped their feet in sacks, Averell among the rest. For sixty miles they followed a road which was one unbroken sheet of ice. Horses fell and crippled themselves and the soldiers did that work, 100 men dragging each gun up the mountains.¹²

They reached Beverly on December 24. From Beverly, Averell took his army to Webster, in Taylor County, and was transported to Martinsburg by train. It wasn't until May, 1864, that General Averell once again took on a major operation. An expedition moved from the Kanawha Valley of West Virginia under Generals Crook and Averell against the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. At this time Pvt. George W. Wilson was transferred to General Crook's army at Charleston, West Virginia, and was promoted to the rank of Sergeant.

On May 9 occurred a desperate battle on Cloyd Mountain, near the boundary between Giles and Pulaski Counties, Virginia, and not far from Salem, Virginia. For a long time the issue of the battle was doubtful; but at length the Confederate General Jenkins fell, and his army gave way. He was mortally wounded and died soon thereafter.

It was at this battle of Cloyd Mountain that Sgt. George Wilson was wounded and then sent back to a Charleston, West Virginia, army hospital, as shown in the preceding official reports.

The story of how Sgt. Wilson was wounded is more than a conjecture—it is a story told to his sons who, in turn, told it to their children. Regrettably it cannot be related now as it was heard years ago.

However, in the battle of Cloyd Mountain, at daylight on the morning of June 21, 1864, three miles West of Salem, Virginia, the Union forces, outnumbered and outpositioned, soon found themselves in a difficult situation and a hot fight; so hot, in fact, they were in a hasty retreat.

Sgt. Wilson, on his horse and with sidearms and a saber his only weapons, led the remnants of his patrol ahead of some cannon but behind other disorganized cavalymen. Then a cannon immediately behind him became bogged down in a small stream and unbeknown to him Confederate soldiers

had swarmed in and were cutting the harness from the horses pulling the cannon.

With Lt. Johnson already killed in the action and everything in confusion, Sgt. Wilson found himself alone amidst his adversaries. Realizing death or capture was imminent, he leveled his pistol at one and shot him and turned just in time to shoot another who was blocking his way to get out of the mess. As he spurred his horse for a fast get-away, a Confederate officer shouted, "Shoot that damned Yankee S.O.B.!" And they did — they shot him in the leg and shot his horse out from under him. He managed to half-run and half-crawl to a nearby corncrib and tried to hide behind it. When some of his own men ahead realized something was amiss they returned to his rescue and the hasty retreat was continued. But, the Union officers were able to regroup their forces and with the news that Confederate General Jenkins had been killed, the Northern soldiers were able to regain their objective and rout the opposition.

Apparently George W. Wilson was in the Army hospital at Charleston, W. Va., for about one month as the records show that he was furloughed July 24, 1864; but his own statement (above) would indicate that he was removed from the Charleston, W. Va., hospital to another at Gallipolis, Ohio. It is not known just when he rejoined his outfit, but he did so.

An appreciation of the Army's organization and situation at the time George Washington Wilson rejoined it can be had from the passage quoted from *Loyal West Virginia*:

*The reorganization of the Army of West Virginia on August 31, 1864 resulted in General George Crook, Commanding, General Averell, Commanding Division, and Colonel William H. Powell, Commanding 2nd Brigade, in which the 3rd W. Va. Cavalry was a part, under Major Lott Bowen. Most of the Army's activity at that time was taking place in the Eastern Pan-handle of West Virginia, in Western Maryland, the South Branch valley of the Potomac River and the Valley of Virginia.*¹³

Sgt. George W. Wilson was in that area before Sept. 21, 1864, and still in the 3rd W. Va. Cavalry; he remained with his outfit until his honorable discharge on July 7, 1865.

In any case, he was in Hagerstown, Maryland, on Sept. 21, 1864. His thoughts at that time, as they had been so many times during the preceding years of war, were of home; of his wife and young children, one of whom had died 16 months after birth.

AN ANNIVERSARY SENTIMENT

With their sixth wedding anniversary only two weeks away he wrote this poem to his wife which reveals a story of true feeling—a story of sadness, steeped with love but still with a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment.

TO MY WIFE ON OUR WEDDING DAY

October 7, 1864

Alone I sit this morning bright
In silent thoughtful mood,
And looking back, amazed I mark
Time's swift vicissitude.

Dear object of my boyish love—
My riper joy and pride;
Six years have passed since you became
My lovely, virgin bride.

Six changeful years since then have fled,
and we have changed with time;
Though changes frequent we have seen,
We are but in our prime.

G-V-A-090

Then I was just to manhood grown,
 And you in beauty bright,
 Gave me your hand, your heart, yourself,
 Six years ago to-night.

Our past was then our childhood days,
 And day of early love,
 And sitting, oft we talked of those,
 Like with its mate the dove.

Our present then was full of joy,
 Though not from prospects bright;
 For each one in the other found
 Our only true delight.

Our future then was all unknown,
 But seemed to bode of ill;
 Our former friends had distant grown
 For we had cross'd their will.

But independent of all aid,
 Save what comes from above,
 We hoped to live on honest bread,
 In innocence and love.

We had not marked our future path
 And knew not whether flowers
 Would Spring to cheer, or thorns to goad
 Us through the coming hours.

But six long years since have fled,
 Six ever changeful years,
 Each filled with joy, and grief, and pain;
 With pleasure, hope, and fears.

But dearest one how can I tell
 Of all that since has past?
 How can I tell of that sweet babe
 With which we first were blest?

That Tender Infant, O how sweet!
 And how divinely fair!
 Too sweet, and bright, and pure to live
 In this inclement air.

On Angels wings of plumage bright,
 'Twas borne up to its home
 Transplanted there in fields of light
 To bloom until we come

Oh what a weight of sorrow then,
 On our young bosoms bore!
 First offspring of our wedded love—
 Our Laura was no more.

Another gem, tho' not so bright,
 Was later to us given,
 Which lives to cheer with prattling noise,
 Our morning, noon and eve'n.

Four years, almost, of quiet life,
 Together we had grasp'd,
 When I was called from home and thee,
 By war's discordant blast.

Now war's dread thunder shock our shores,
 For treason's bloody hand
 Had sown discord, revenge and death
 In our once happy land.

O dark the hour and sad my heart,
 When first from you I parted'.
 Obeying tho' my country's call,
 For weal or wo I started.

And now, two weary years of war,
 Have slowly worn away.
 But through the angry, troubled gloom
 There yet appears no day.

Still day will come. The darkest hour
 Precedes the early dawn,
 And fast the time approaches when
 This trouble shall be gone.

And then our starry flag shall wave,
 Once more o'er all the land,
 And no more shall there be a slave,
 Beneath its fold so grand.

Peace and plenty then will bless
 Again our happy land,
 And reunited in our strength
 We ever more shall stand.

How gladly then will I return
 From war and danger free,
 To spend the remnant of my days,
 My darling wife with Thee.

Written at Hagerstown, Maryland, September 21, 1864.¹⁴

Perhaps one of his reasons for writing this poem, other than its being for his wedding anniversary, was due in part to remorsefulness. It had been a hard and dangerous war, but fighting under General Averell had been a great experience

and Sgt. Wilson was proud of being one of his men. On September 23, 1864, General Averell was succeeded in command of his division by Col. William H. Powell and Lieut. Col. McGee was in command of the 3rd cavalry. It was evident that the war was nearing its end.

PROMOTED TO FIRST LIEUTENANT

On February 19, 1865, George W. Wilson's promotion to First Lieutenant became effective. On February 27th the regiment broke camp and moved, with the Cavalry Corps commanded by Major General Sheridan, up the Valley to Staunton, Virginia. There was considerable action including the battle of Waynesboro, Virginia, on March 2, in which they defeated General Early; then Charlottesville, followed by the famous raid on the James River Canal. The command arrived at White House, Virginia, on March 19 where it remained in camp until March 24. They marched then via Charles City Court House and crossed the James River at Deep Bottom.

On the morning of April 2 at Ford Station, Virginia, the 3rd Regiment under Lieut. Col. John S. Witcher, charged and drove a brigade of Confederate cavalry, killing the Confederate General Pegram. Pegram, as a Colonel, had commanded the Confederates at the Battle of Rich Mountain, Randolph County, West Virginia, at the start of the war.

The regiment continued to do duty in all the exciting and closing scenes, terminating with the surrender at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865.

The scene of the meeting of Generals Lee and Grant and the story of the event that took place is well known to all Americans, as are the terms of surrender. Of Appomattox Court House and the happenings which made it famous the Encyclopaedia Britannica (11th edition) makes this brief reference:

*Appomattox Court House, a village of Appomattox County, Virginia — The village was the scene of the surrender of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia under General Robert E. Lee to the Federal forces under Lieutenant-General U. S. Grant on Sunday, the 9th of April 1865. The terms were: "The officers to give their individual paroles not to take up arms against the government of the United States until properly exchanged, and each Company or Regimental Commander to sign a like parole for the men of their command, — neither side arms of the officers nor their private horses or baggage to be surrendered; and, as many privates of the Confederate Army owned horses and mules, all horses and mules claimed by men in the Confederate Army to be left in their possession."*¹⁵

AT WAR'S END

The end had come. The grief and sadness among all people was to be shared and felt for many years to come. Families, split by the war, brother against brother — father against son — remained severed for all their lives.

The regiment of Lieutenant George W. Wilson participated in the Grand Review at Washington, D.C., on May 23, 1865. It was later mustered out at the place of its beginning— at Camp Wiley, near Wheeling, W. Va., on June 23, 1865. Lt. Wilson's honorable discharge is dated July 7, 1865.

During the war, George W. Wilson's regiment had lost six officers and 40 enlisted men who were killed on the battlefield or later died of wounds received there. Another 136 died of disease or in prison.

In the war itself, on both sides, more men were killed or died in service than in all other U.S. wars combined before and since — from the Revolution to the war in Vietnam. A sad record indeed.

George W. Wilson returned home. His reunion with his wife, Eliza, and their baby, Daniel Webster, was a wish fulfilled for the entire family. The small house that George had built at the foot of Conaway Hill became a happy, busy castle.

Call it what you may — fulfillment of a purpose, satisfaction of a desire, or helping somebody in need — when Lt. Wilson returned to his Maryland farm he brought with him one of the many slaves whom he had helped to free. This former slave, known as "Blackie" Lewis, had attended Lt. Wilson's horse during the last months of the war and wanted to go home with him. Eliza didn't like the idea too much, but "Blackie" stayed with the Wilsons two or three years, helping to clear land and taking care of the chores. Also, he found other work in the community but, after some time, he left for places unknown.

FARMING AND LUMBERING

George W. Wilson turned his efforts to his farm and to the manufacture of lumber and staves. In addition to the small utility circular sawmill which he had built prior to the war in a grove on Haws Flat, he now built two more, a big circular mill and another smaller one at Red Oak. The smaller mill was used to help in the manufacture of staves. It was on one of these mills that a boiler later blew up, killing at least three persons and causing much sadness in the little community.

To operate his sawmills, George continued cutting trees from his own property and buying additional lands for the same purpose. He bought the "Brice Howard Improvement" at Elk Garden, West Virginia, totaling 1600 acres. The first parcel of 800 acres was purchased from Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Baker on Jan. 27, 1869, for \$2500.00 on yearly terms. The second plot, also containing 800 acres, was bought from Lewis Ferdinand and others on Jan. 2, 1872, for \$2500.00 cash.

A desire for a larger place in which to rear a family was realized when George and Eliza built the house of their dreams on Haws Flat. The structure which featured a large porch, was situated on top of the hill amidst field trees and became another Wilson Homestead. From the forest a sugar grove was

reserved. It was "tapped" and worked for many years by George and by others who followed. A family cemetery was laid out and it is there that George, Eliza, and some of their children and grandchildren rest today.

With more families moving into the area to work on the mills and farms, the need for a school was imminent and a one-room frame school building was built on the home place. Later, a larger school house was built and James A. Harvey (6124), of Parlier, California, in a letter written Mar. 3, 1961, referred to this school as follows:

I remember Mr. Geo. W. Wilson. I was just a boy. As a member of the Abernathy School Board he would visit our school and see how things were going. Father told me he [George W. Wilson] gave the land the building stood on and also, I believe, much of the lumber.¹⁶

Continuing, Mr. Harvey's letter gave from his memory other information of interest:

He had a shook shop in the edge of what we always called Wilson's Meadow. There they made staves of fine big original red oak trees, going all over the forest cutting down the red oak giants. Staves were used to make whiskey barrels.

My father and Mr. Wilson spent many a winter day sledding the staves to Oakland, Md., which was the nearest rail shipping point then.¹⁷

Prior to the Civil War, Western Maryland and West Virginia were undeveloped. The Northwestern Turnpike and the National Road were the principal means of transportation to the Ohio River and westward.

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had reached the Ohio River about December, 1853, and was operating to Wheeling by Jan. 1, 1854, according to William H. Davis in his book, *Railroads and Rivers*. A young man by the name of Henry Gassaway Davis had been a brakeman and a conductor on the B. & O. He was promoted to station agent at Piedmont,

West Virginia, but resigned in 1858 to enter private business with a brother, Thomas. The railroad had played a very important part in the Civil War, as it did in the post-war period.

The Civil War brought about many other changes, including those of a political and territorial nature. West Virginia became a state on June 20, 1863. New counties were formed in many places including Maryland.

Garrett County was created from portions of Allegany County by an act of the General Assembly of Maryland, approved April 1, 1872. It constitutes the extreme northwestern section of the state, and is bounded on the north by Pennsylvania, on the east by Allegany County, and on the south and west by West Virginia.

The Mason-Dixon line is the boundary between Garrett County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on the north, and the North Branch of the Potomac River separates it from West Virginia on the southeast.

Garrett County was named in honor of John W. Garrett, the distinguished president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

A POLITICAL CAREER

In addition to being occupied with his farm and lumber business, George Wilson was being sought out by his neighbors and friends to represent the newly formed county in the State Assembly. The first nominating convention (composed of members of both parties) for Garrett County, met at the Glades Hotel, Oakland, Maryland, on Dec. 14, 1872. A committee was appointed, composed of two delegates from each district (one for each party) to present a ticket to the convention. The candidates and total votes for State Senate were:

George W. Wilson (R)	985
Wm. R. Getty (D)	1075
David B. White (G.L.)	53

George Wilson's district was established and described as "Altamont District No. 1, bounded on the north by Grantsville and Sang Run Districts, east by Bloomington District and West Virginia and the District of Ryan's Glades and Oakland, and west by Oakland."

This initial defeat did not deter George Wilson. He was elected three times to the Maryland House of Delegates on the Republican ticket, in 1877, 1879, and 1887. He was a candidate for the Senate in 1881 but again was defeated by the same opponent who had defeated him previously, William R. Getty. However, at the time of his untimely death in 1894 he was being urged by his friends to be a candidate for the Congress of the United States.

In George's everyday life, it can be seen that foresight and energy were important facets of his overall ability. With the knowledge that someday a railroad would be built through his holdings and extended into the vast undeveloped area of West Virginia, George Wilson's own plans for the future were made with this railroad in mind. This is substantiated by the fact that he had bought the 1600 acres of timberland near Elk Garden, West Virginia downstream about 15 miles from the community which, by this time, was well known as "Wilson."¹⁸

In 1866 an act had been passed by the state legislature incorporating the Potomac & Piedmont Coal and Railroad Company. Henry Gassaway Davis, the former B. & O. railroad brakeman-conductor and station agent at Piedmont, West Virginia (see above) whose prevision had brought to him great success, was named president. He was to become a U.S. Senator from West Virginia and later a candidate for Vice-President of the United States.

It was not until 1880 that work was commenced on the railroad from Piedmont up the Potomac, and it was opened to traffic to Elk Garden, a distance of 18 miles. In the meantime

the name on the charter was changed to that of the West Virginia Central & Pittsburgh Railroad. By Aug., 1883, the railroad was opened to a point 32 miles from Piedmont and seven miles from Thomas, West Virginia. The town, at first was named for a Mr. Camden, one of the railroad company's directors, but the Wilsons protested so much it was changed to "Wilson." The railroad had been constructed through the town of Wilson about 1882.

LUMBERING A FAMILY AFFAIR

With a railroad available for hauling supplies and marketing products and with sons growing into manhood, George W. Wilson's lumber business and farming interests were becoming a family affair. Daniel Webster Wilson (6306) born Nov. 29, 1861, was by now 21 years of age. George's second son, Merritt (6307), having been born on Dec. 7, 1866, was 16. Marshall Ney, born Jan. 30, 1869, was a youngster of 11 years of age. Four younger boys and a sister were growing up also.

When West Virginia became a state in 1863 one of its natural boundaries was the west prong of the Potomac River which has its source at Fairfax Stone, a comparatively few miles above Wilson. George W. Wilson later established a sawmill at Fairfax Stone. The new West Virginia Central & Pittsburg Railroad, later named the Western Maryland Railroad, followed the West Virginia side of the West Prong of the Potomac River from Piedmont to a point above Fairfax Stone, at what now is the town of Thomas, West Virginia. From Thomas the railroad descended the mountain to Parsons, county seat of Tucker County, West Virginia, and was continued to Elkins, the county seat of Randolph County, West Virginia. It reached Elkins in 1889.

This matter of location is mentioned due to the fact that the railroad station of Wilson was and is located on the West Virginia side of the river, whereas, a large new sawmill which

had replaced the smaller ones, had been built nearby but on the Maryland side of the river. Although some of the houses were constructed in West Virginia, as were the business office and general store of George W. Wilson, most of those living and working at Wilson had their homes on the Maryland side of the river.

The "big mill," as it was called, had "Old Betsy," a steam engine contraption which looked like a house, hauling logs in from surrounding areas in Maryland. The ingenious engine ran on wooden rails four inches square and went up to Red Oak and to other places where timber was available closeby. A shingle mill was built on the West Virginia side where a smaller tramway was built and horses were used for pulling the trucks.

In the latter part of 1884, George W. Wilson extended his operation to his Elk Garden, West Virginia, property about 15 miles down the Potomac River from Wilson. H. W. Schell, a member of a well-known pioneer family for which the railroad station of "Schell" was named, kept a diary which extended over the years from 1881 to 1908. It reveals interesting facts about the work involved in building a sawmill and shook mill, presumably on the 1200 acres which George Wilson had prudently purchased at Elk Garden in 1862.

Daniel Webster Wilson (6306), the eldest son of George and Eliza Wilson, who had a natural talent for mechanics and later took up surveying, helped in constructing the Wilson mills as well as the shook plant, and excerpts from Schell's diary mention this fact. Portions of the Diary are included here to illustrate the sturdiness of people who worked in that almost forgotten time, their long hours and hard winters and the frugality inherited from generations of pioneers. From the almost two dozen school "composition" books in which Schell kept his daily account of life, the following excerpts are typical:

Tuesday, Nov. 4, 1884 — *Nice day. I went to the electing at Hartmansville and voted for J. G. Blaine & Logan. Pa came home here and spent the night.*

Wednesday, Nov. 5, 1884 — *Very snowy and stormy. Pa and myself went down to the sawmill. Webster was there and started the shook machinery.*

After working a few days building a shook shop, Schell, on the following Friday, wrote:

"Nice weather. Webster and myself fixed up the machinery and worked some staves."

From that time on, the stave mill operated regularly. Schell wrote of building a new house "down by the mill." Always, he commented about the weather and of such things as, on December 1, 1884, he wrote:

"James Aronhalt hauled my potatoes and pickles down with Wilson's team. I got a big new pair of boots from G. W. Wilson."

Apparently holidays, including Christmas and New Years day, did not interfere with work. On December 25, 1884, Schell wrote:

"Clear and cold. Snowed more at night. We worked staves"

And, on New Year's day, 1885, he continued:
"Bold & stormy. We worked staves. We are working at night to."

Despite sub-zero weather they worked at something every day. A note of interest was recorded on Saturday, January 24, 1885, as follows:

"Warm, windy and thawy. Grandma Wilson came to stay awhile with us"¹⁹

Daniel Webster Wilson had been working at the shook mill when he reached his twenty-third birthday on Nov. 29, 1884. His mechanical abilities had stood him in good stead as he installed and maintained the equipment. But as his brothers grew from boyhood to manhood they were to take their places

G-V-A-090

in life, but there were insufficient jobs in their father's lumber business for all of them. Even so, when old enough, three sons did take an active part in the work at Wilson. Marshall Ney worked in his father's office as a young man, and Burt ran the store and post office, and Merritt helped take care of things in general, after spending a few months at Bridgewater College in Virginia. Daniel became a surveyor for the state.

Ten years later, in 1894, George W. Wilson became ill and entered a Baltimore hospital.

On the business stationery of his father, Marshall Ney (6308), on September 6, 1894, wrote to his ailing father the following letter informing him of business and political matters and of things at home.

GEORGE W. WILSON

manufacturer of

SPRUCE HEMLOCK AND HARDWOODS TO ORDER

building lumber, rough and dressed

ALSO SHINGLES, LATHS, SIDING, FLOORING, ETC.

WILSON, W. VA. September 6th 1894

Mr. Geo. W. Wilson
Baltimore, Md.

Dear Father:—

Will this evening drop you a few lines to tell you how things are going up here. We are all as well as usual. There were several up to the convention at Elkins yesterday from here, Lem among the rest; they had quite an enthusiastic time there. Ex-President Harrison spoke and several others, and there were quite a large crowd there to nominate Dayton. It seems as though Wellington got the nomination at Frederick. On the first ballot, Allegany and Montgomery went for W. and the other counties for their candidates, and on the second ballot, Wellington carried all the counties except Frederick, which went four for you and two for Vinson, the Garrett delegation going for Wellington this time. This shows that if you could have made any kind of a canvass that you could have gotten the Frederick delegation

and very likely enough other to carry the convention, but as it was, you being unable to attend to anything, Wellington got it again. All the boys here seem very much put out about it and say that they will not vote for Wellington. P. Sullivan was here this morning and said that you are the man that should have had the nomination without question.

We have been shipping considerable stuff this week and orders are coming in as fast as we are shipping. I got home Sunday morning, stopped at Martinsburg but could not sell any thing there but a load of spruce lath and did not have them on hand.

The weather has been very dry here until this evening it has rained some little, but not enough to wet the ground much yet.

Lee Simmons has quit his job trucking and we have been talking of giving the job to Wm. Conneway, to begin the first of the week. What do you think of him for the place? He will come if we want him. I told him that I would let him know definitely about it before now and Monday next. George seems very well pleased with his gun, was up with Webster two nights the first of the week and killed some red squirrels with it. We sold the others out without any trouble.

Will have to close for this time as it is almost train time.
Hope this may find you on the mend.

Yours very respectfully,
(signed) M. N. Wilson²⁰

Three months later, on December 8, 1894 at the age of 58 years the exciting and successful career of George Washington Wilson came to an end when the prominent soldier, political figure and businessman, died. Some attributed his illness and death to "liver trouble" but Mrs. Ritchie, who lived with the family, is of the opinion that it was cancer of the liver. Mrs. Burt Wilson, a granddaughter-in-law, wrote a note in 1964 in Leesburg, Florida, to the effect that "Grandfather Wilson died of cancer of the stomach at the homestead in terrible agony" and had almost starved since he was unable to utilize food.

G-V-A-090

Fortunately, at the time of George W. Wilson's death, the business which he had established was in the hands of his experienced sons. Burton Wilson (6264), who has been quoted in this history previously, and who was a grandson of James and Lucinda Junkins Wilson, explained in a letter dated March 10, 1961, what happened to the business:

When he died he left a going lumber business, store and other assets. His heirs, showing exceptional good sense, incorporated his estate into the Wilson Lumber Company, issued stock and divided it among the heirs. They elected officers and kept the business going. Anyway the dividends educated Mark, George and Sicely.²¹

TRIBUTES TO GEORGE WASHINGTON WILSON

During George Washington Wilson's life and after his death, a number of tributes to him appeared in newspapers of the area. His obituary and an editorial appearing on the same day appear in Appendix F. Even more meaningful, however, is a tribute published while a person is still alive. Such a piece from *The Republican*, which exemplified the family and community pride in this man was written during his tenure in public office and is a fitting ending to our discussion of his life:

Hon. George W. Wilson was born at Wilson's Mills, Allegheny (now Garrett Co.), Maryland, September 4, 1836. His opportunities for acquiring an education were limited to the old fashioned log school house and the primitive textbooks and teachers of an era lately gone by. To those he added close application to study by the light of the candle when the toil of the day was done. Married at twenty-two he began life on a tract of wild land situated on the drains which form the headwaters of the North Branch of the Potomac, then almost a broken wilderness. Here he had ample opportunity to indulge in his favorite pastime of hunting when more substantial and exciting pursuits permitted. The region abounded with game, and afforded occasion for displays of prowess as well as the exhilaration of the chase. Mr. Wilson has killed four deer and on two occasions three bears in one day. Primarily Mr. Wilson is a farmer, tho' collaterally he is engaged in lumbering and cooper-

ing. Essentially self-made in all departments of his business, he adds to farming considerable proficiency in surveying, sawing and blacksmithing, and is thus able to adapt himself to accommodating all the demands of his isolated locality. In politics Mr. Wilson is a Republican. This is his second term in the House of Delegates, the only civil position he has had. He occupies a place on the committees on Elections and Manufactures. He is a useful member and represents his people faithfully and ably.²³

Eliza Harvey Wilson

Eliza Harvey Wilson (5148), born in the Ryan Glades community near Kitzmiller, Maryland on July 15, 1837, was a daughter of Noah and Sarah Wilson (457) Harvey. As previously noted, she was a first cousin of George Washington Wilson (5139) whom she married on October 6, 1858. Also, references to her young womanhood and early life as a bride have been mentioned. Her middle life was confined largely to rearing a sizeable family and maintaining her home. Of her late years when, as a widow and in failing health, some comment is made here for posterity.

According to Edward Lee Ritchie and his wife, Emma Dorcas Ritchie, who worked for the aging Eliza Harvey Wilson for twelve years and cared for her during nine years of illness, she was about five feet six or seven inches tall and a rather slender woman.

In conversing about Eliza Wilson and of her years caring for her, Mrs. Ritchie told of a trip Eliza had made to visit her son, Merritt Wilson, Sr., at Wildell, W. Va. where he operated a sawmill. "Grandmother, as everybody called her, went to Wildell in 1907 and spent the winter there but was very homesick. She returned to her farm home just as soon as there was a sign of Springtime."

Eliza Harvey Wilson's primary interest in life was her family and her home. She was a Christian woman, being a member of the Methodist church which she attended reg-

G-V-A-096

ularly when able to do so. According to Mrs. Ritchie, "Grandmother Wilson had favorite verses but said 'it was all good'."

Following her husband's death in 1894, Eliza received a pension of about \$20.00 a month. Once a government man called on her and asked if she received a pension check. She hesitated and wondered about the question before replying "no." But those with her at the time nodded in the affirmative. The visitor asked her if her sons took good care of her and she said, "My boys will do anything for me and get me anything I want."

In commenting on Eliza Wilson's health, Mrs. Ritchie said, "Grandmother's mind was not too good at times. She suffered a stroke and then fell from a couch. This put her to bed and she never walked any more and was bedfast for three years prior to her death."

Eliza Harvey Wilson died peacefully on March 10, 1918, at the age of eighty one years. She is buried at her husband's side in the family cemetery on Haws Flat, a short distance from the homestead where they had lived.

NOTES TO CHAPTER NINE

¹Col. George Washington Wilson's Notebook and oral sources.

²Letter from Burt Wilson (6310) to the author, March 10, 1961.

³*Ibid.*

⁴See Theodore F. Lang, *Loyal West Virginia From 1861 to 1865* (Baltimore: Deutch Publishing Company, 1895), p. 197.

⁵Land records of Allegany County, Maryland; transaction dated March 18, 1862. (Liber H. N., Record 20, Folio 112).

⁶War Department, Office of Adjutant General, report of August 12, 1880.

⁷*Ibid.*, report of May 15, 1909.

⁸Decision of Garrett County, Maryland, Circuit Court, case initiated June 17, 1879.

⁹Hu Maxwell, *History of Randolph County* (Parsons, W. Va.: McClain Printing Company), p. 18.

¹⁰*Loc. cit.*

¹¹*Loc. cit.*

¹²*Loc. cit.*

¹³Theodore F. Lang, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

¹⁴This poem, in George Washington Wilson's handwriting which can still be faintly read from paper yellow and crisp with age, is in possession of the author in its original leather wallet.

¹⁵*Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

¹⁶Letter from Mr. James A. Harvey, P. O. Box 105, Parlier, California, March 3, 1961.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸See also Hamill Kenny, *West Virginia Place Names* in which he says of Wilson, "First railroad station (for about a year) was Camden. In 1885, was Wilson's Mills. Now Wilson, for George W. Wilson, school teacher, lumber manufacturer, and first postmaster."

¹⁹All of the italicized matter on page 307 is excerpted from the diary maintained by H. W. Schell from 1881 to 1908.

²⁰Letter from Marshall Ney Wilson (6308) to George Washington Wilson (5139), dated September 6, 1894, and in possession of the author.

²¹Letter from Burt Wilson (6310) to the author, March 10, 1961.

²²*The Oakland Republican*, April 17, 1880.

CHAPTER TEN

The Family of George Washington
and Eliza Harvey Wilson

Our final chapter will concern the family of George Washington (5139) and Eliza Harvey (5148) Wilson, which we will carry down to the present day as far as the facts are known. This will complete the direct line from Thomas Wilson I to the young grandson of the author.

George and Eliza had nine children, seven sons and one daughter of which attained adulthood. The brief life of the little girl who was their first child, Laura Eugenia (6305) has already been mentioned in the foregoing chapter, which dealt with the life of this exceptional man.

The penchant of this couple for naming their sons for famous political and military figures was first evidenced when their oldest son, Daniel Webster Wilson (6306) was born. The other imaginative names can be seen on the family tree:

<i>Family</i>		
<i>of</i>		
George Washington (5139) and Eliza Harvey (5148) WILSON		
6305	6306	6307
<i>Laura Eugenia</i>	<i>Daniel Webster</i>	<i>Merritt</i>
(b. Sept. 19, 1859 d. Jan. 15, 1861)	(b. Nov. 29, 1861 d. Sept. 6, 1931)	(b. Dec. 7, 1866 d. May 10, 1951)
6308	6309	6310
<i>Marshall Ney</i>	<i>Solon T.</i>	<i>Burt</i>
(b. Jan. 30, 1869 d. Nov. 3, 1947)	(b. July 23, 1871 d.)	(b. July 15, 1873 d. Aug. 31, 1948)
6311	6312	6313
<i>Mark Stanley</i>	<i>Sicely May</i>	<i>George Washington</i>
(b. July 18, 1877 d. Apr. 27, 1953)	(b. Sept. 12, 1879 d. Oct. 8, 1904)	(b. Feb. 6, 1884 d. Oct. 10, 1945)

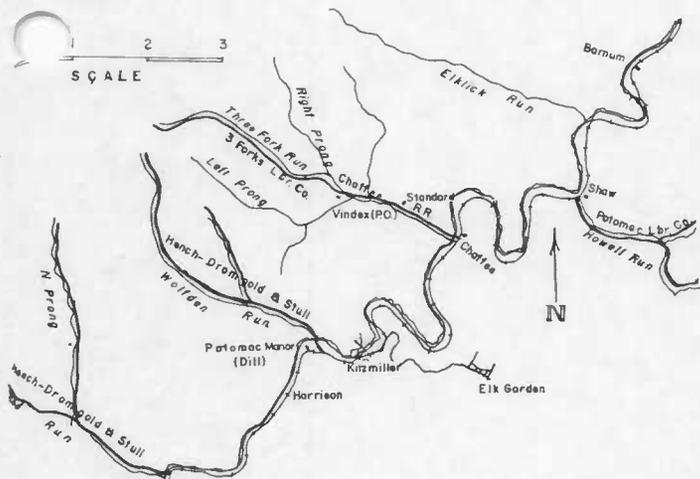
G-V-A-090
Wilson Survey District

#9 MAJOR BIBIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

¹ Benjamin F.G. Kline, Jr. Tall Pines and Winding Rivers,
1976, p. 79.

² Merritt Wilson, Jr. The Wilson Family. (Athens, Ohio:
Lawhead Press, 1971), p. 305, 306.

³ Kline, p. 79, 81.



VINDEX - SHAW AREA LOGGING RAILROADS

Cheat & Elk Railroad, where it was their No. 14. The last locomotive on the Chaffee branch was No. 6, a 152-ton, three-truck Shay outshopped by Lima in 1945, and was the heaviest Shay ever built by the company. It served on the 9% grades of the Chaffee branch until it was abandoned in 1954. The No. 6 was then taken to Baltimore under its own power and placed in the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum at Mount Clair, where it remains on display at this date (1976). It was also the last geared locomotive in service in Maryland.

HENCH-DROMGOOD & SCHULL

Dill, West Virginia

This organization was a farm implement company of York, Pennsylvania, which purchased the timber rights of the Manor Mining & Manufacturing Company of Baltimore, Maryland near Dill.

L. E. Schull was manager and the company built a sawmill, store, and small town at Dill, later renamed Potomac Manor. The company started in 1894 and closed in 1899. They did a little cutting on the West Virginia side, but most of their timber was located along Wolf Den and Lost Land Runs in Maryland. They used a small steam locomotive and had quite a bit of track up Lost Land Run. The first coal was mined in 1897. Most of the lumber went to Berwick, Pennsylvania for building freight cars, with a lesser amount going to their factory at York.

GEORGE W. WILSON

WILSON LUMBER COMPANY

Wilson, Garrett County, Maryland

Wilson's Mills, now known as Wilson, is located in Grant County, West Virginia, and is across the North Branch of the Potomac River from the village of Wilson in Garrett County, Maryland. The construction of the West Virginia Central & Pittsburgh Railway reached this point in 1882, and the town lies halfway between Bayard and Dobbin.

George W. Wilson, for whom the village of Wilson

was named, settled there in 1860, and in the latter part of the 1860's, started his lumber business. He erected a Shook Shop, where he manufactured staves and beading for barrels. This product was hauled by team and wagon to Oakland, Maryland, a distance of about 10 miles, where it was loaded on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.

The railroad arrived at Wilson in 1882, and George Wilson erected a large circular sawmill on the Maryland side of the Potomac River. The lumber yard was on the West Virginia side, where the lumber was loaded into railroad cars. In the beginning, the sawlogs were hauled on a horse tram to the mill and some were also floated on the Potomac River to a receiving dam at the mill. Then on July 1, 1891, Mr. Wilson purchased a 13-ton, Class A, Gilbert Patent locomotive from the Dunkirk Engineering Company of Dunkirk, New York to haul his logs.

Mr. Wilson obtained 2,546 acres of timberland in Garrett County, Maryland along the forks of Sand Run onto the slope of Backbone Mountain. The remaining acreage cut at Wilson was in West Virginia, principally from the Red Run territory.

George W. Wilson died on December 8, 1894 at the age of 58. His sons, who had been assisting him in his lumber business, now organized the Wilson Lumber Company, and continued their fathers business. The members of the firm were Merritt, Webster, Marshal Ney, Bert, and their mother Eliza. Merritt Wilson was elected as president and general manager.

The available timber around Wilson was cut out in 1900, and they looked elsewhere for timber to continue operations. This was found at the headwaters of the Potomac River near the Fairfax Stone in both Maryland and West Virginia. A railroad siding was put in at Fairfax and a narrow gauge railroad was constructed from Fairfax Siding to the sawmill, a distance of about 2 miles. In addition, a few houses were constructed at the mill site for the employees. The lumber was transported from the mill to Fairfax Siding on narrow gauge flat cars pulled by a 17-ton Shay locomotive. There it was piled to dry, then loaded into boxcars for shipment. This operation terminated in 1907.

From 1907 until 1911, the Wilson Lumber Company operated near Beverly, West Virginia, south of Elkins with 2 small circular saw mill operations. Meanwhile, the Wilsons were looking for a larger operation. They



Frank E. Wilson
The Wilson mill crew at Fairfax.

*Benjamin F. G. Kline, Jr.
Tall Piney & Winding Rivers.
privately published, 1976.*

found it when Hench, Drumgold and Shull, a Pennsylvania Company operating at Mill Creek, West Virginia offered to sell out to the Wilsons. The purchase of the Hench, Drumgold and Shull holdings consisted of a 15,000 foot per day capacity mill in operation, 25 acres of good bottom land, a fully stocked store, several houses, a yard full of lumber and 8 miles of narrow gauge railroad laid up the Tygarts Valley. About 9,000 acres of timber were contracted from the Logan heirs, and additional acreage was purchased as the operation progressed. The narrow gauge railroad was extended to the head of the valley over which both log trains, and a scheduled passenger train operated. This railroad was chartered as the Valley River Railroad. It was a common carrier operating a straight connected passenger engine, and several geared logging engines. There was a new band mill built in 1911 for this operation that cut 30 to 35,000 feet of lumber daily. This mill started sawing during November, and cut its last log on September 23, 1931. The total cut during this period amounted to 150,000,000 feet of high quality Appalachian hardwoods.

The company moved onto a circular saw mill operation at Bernardstown, near Bergoo, where it operated for about 3 years. Upon the completion of this job, the company liquidated.

Other sawmill operating companies that the Wilson's have started and managed from 1910 to the present time included the Intermountain Coal & Lumber Company, the Wildell Lumber Company, the Chaffey-Wilson Lumber Company, the Ruthbell Lumber Company, the Marlin Lumber Company and the Frank E. Wilson Lumber Company.

McMILLEN LUMBER COMPANY Wilson, West Virginia

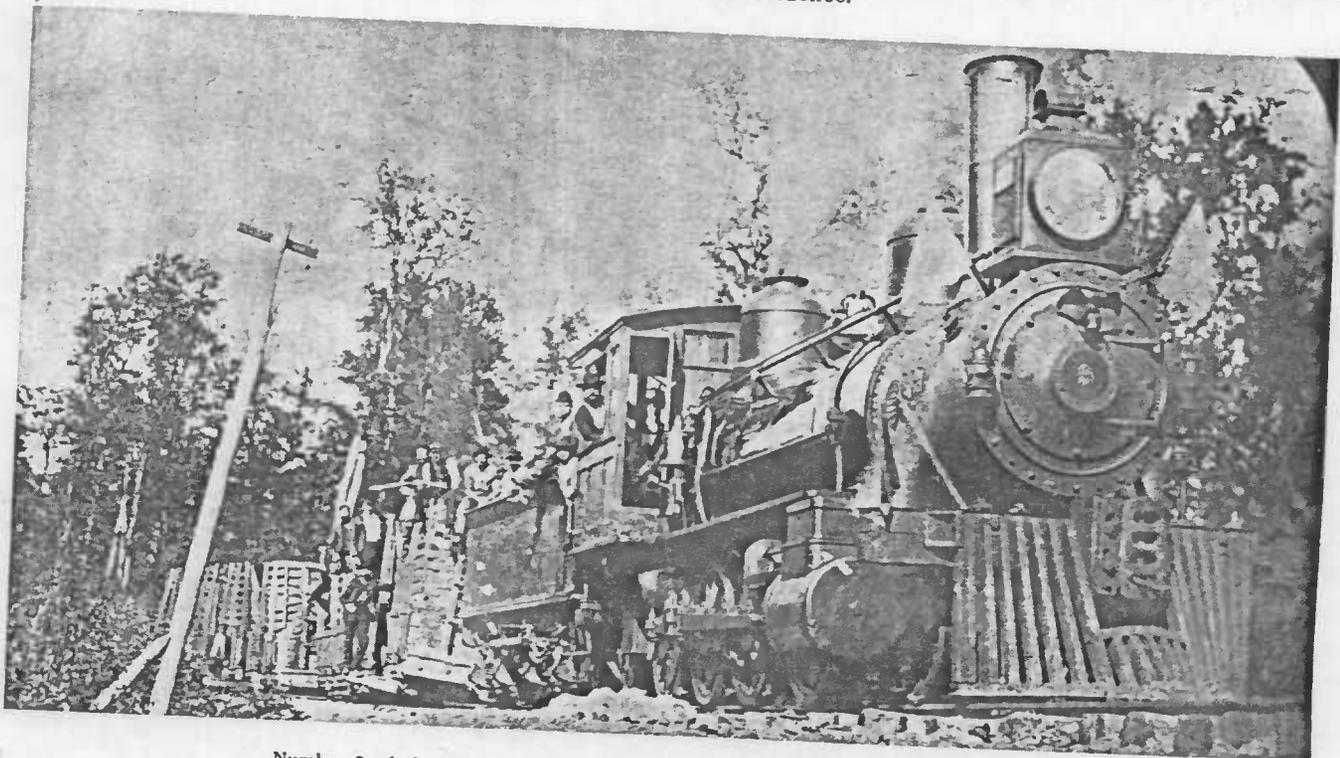
In the early 1900's, information confirms that George and William McMillan had a narrow gauge logging railroad along Buffalo Run in Grant County, West Virginia. The railroad station, railroad siding, and store were at Wilson, with the workmen's dwellings located across the Potomac River in Garrett County. This or the proceeding company may have cut and had a logging railroad along Sand Run in Garrett County, but this is uncertain. Information concerning the sawmill is unknown.

WILLIAM WHITMER & SONS COMPANY Emory, West Virginia

The William Whitmer & Sons Company was from Sunbury and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It is known they operated a band mill and logging railroad in the vicinity of Emory, Mineral County, prior to 1900. The precise location, length, and motive power is uncertain.

EPILOG

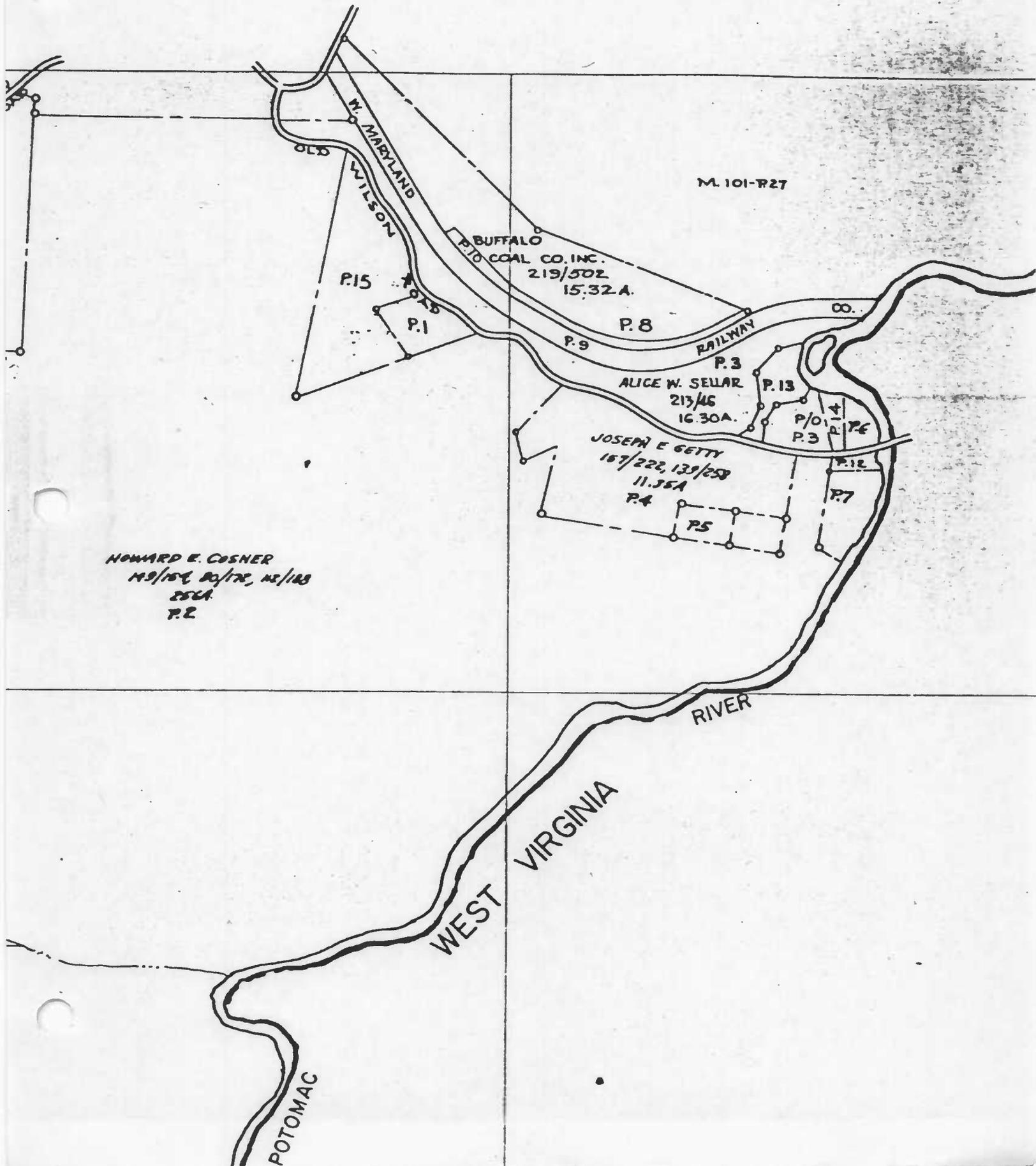
There were many small communities along the North Branch of the Potomac River which boasted sawmills of moderate size. Many had logging railroads leading into West Virginia or Maryland. Those that are known have been accounted. However, due to the large amount of coal mining that followed the removal of the timber, and the subsequent dispersal of the workers after the coal mining finished, evidence of their existence has been erased, covered over, or forgotten. Towns that once hosted upwards to 300 people have vanished, and with them, the evidence.



Number 9 of the W. Va. Central & Pittsburgh Railway at Wallman, Maryland.

Howard Conley

Tall Piney and Winding Piney



M. 101-R27

BUFFALO
PJO COAL CO. INC.
219/502
15.32 A.

ALICE W. SELLAR
213/46
16.30A.

JOSEPH E. GETTY
157/222, 139/258
11.35A
P.4

HOWARD E. COSNER
14.9/184, 80/172, 42/128
254A
P.2

P.15
P.1

P.13
P.O.
P.3
P.E.

P.12
P.7

POTOMAC RIVER

WEST VIRGINIA

POTOMAC

M. MARYLAND
WILSON

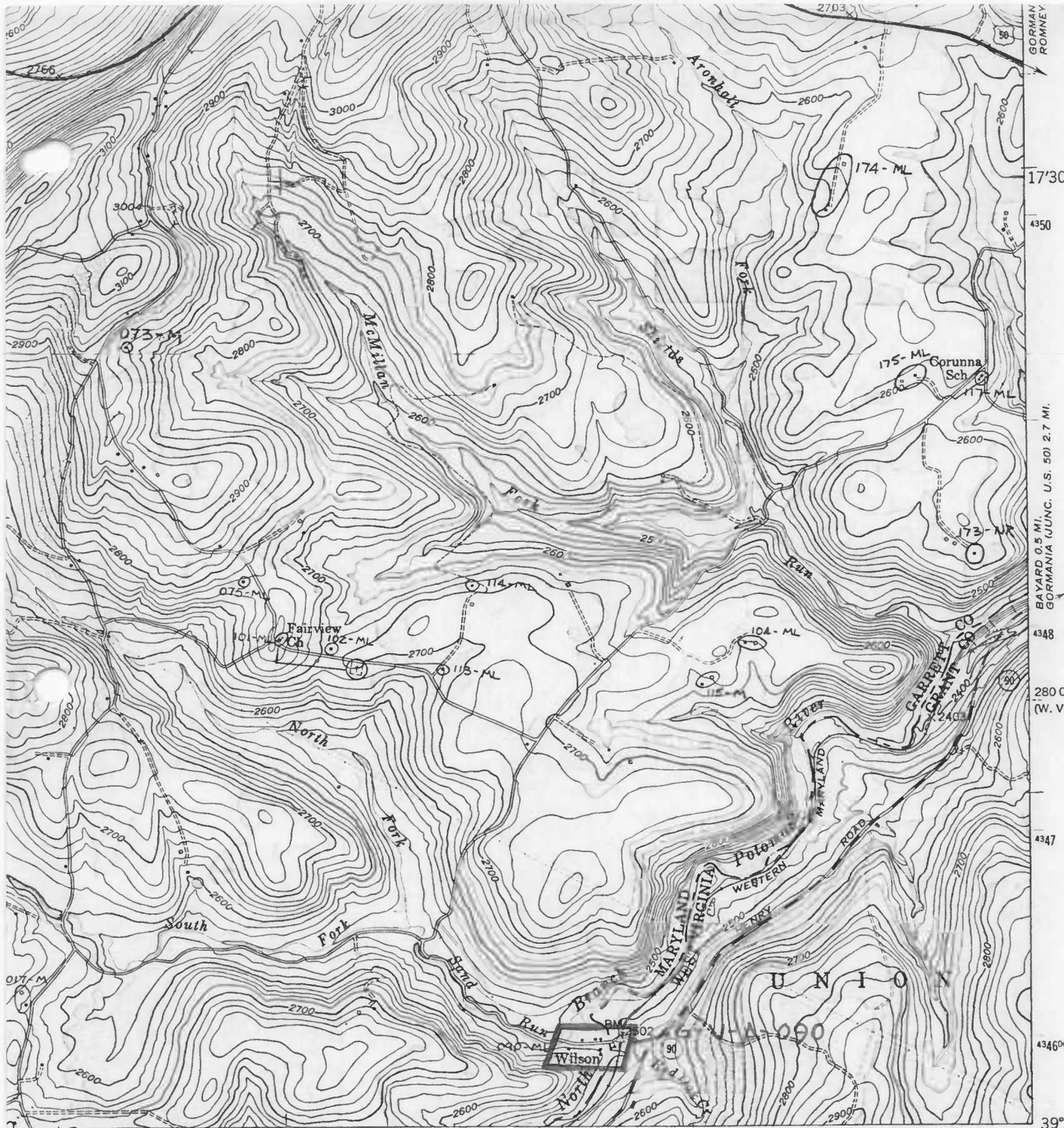


Table Rock
 Gorman, MD-WV
 7.5 Minute Series
 Scale 1:24,000
 1949: photorevised 1974

G-V-A-090
 Wilson Survey District
 Old Wilson Rd., at North Branch Potomac River



G. V. A-090

WILSON SURVEY DISTRICT
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND
AND GRANT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

V. CESNA

29 SEPT. 1980

#1 R. C. SHUMAKER GENERAL STORE (W. VA.)
FACADE E ELEVATION

FIGURE 174



G-V-A-090

G. V. A. 090

WILSON SENEY DISTRICT
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND
AND GRANT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

V CESNA

29 SEPT. 1980

#1 B.C. SHUMAKER GENERAL STORE (W. VA.)
BEAR WAYS ELEVATIONS



G-V-A-090

WILSON SURVEY DISTRICT
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND
AND GRANT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

V. CESNA

29 SEPT. 1980

#1 R C SHUMAKER GENERAL STORE (W. VA.)

INTERICE. POST OFFICE



G-V-A-090

WILSON SURVEY DISTRICT
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND
AND GRANT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

D. WARE

29 SEPT. 1980

#2 (MD)

FACADE: E ELEVATION



G-4-A-090

WILSON SURVEY DISTRICT
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND
AND GRANT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

D. WARE

29 SEPT. 1980

#2 (MD.)

REAR: W ELEVATION



G-V-A-090

WILSON SURVEY DISTRICT
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND
AND GRANT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

V. CESNA

29 SEPT. 1980

#3 (MD.)

FACADE E ELEVATION



G-V-A-090

WILSON SURVEY DISTRICT
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND
AND GRANT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

V. CESNA

29 SEPT 1980

#3 (MD)

BEAR: W + N ELEVATIONS



G-4-A-090

WILSON SURVEY DISTRICT
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND
AND GRANT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

D WARE

29 SEPT. 1980

#4 (MD.)

FACADE: S ELEVATION



G-V-A-090

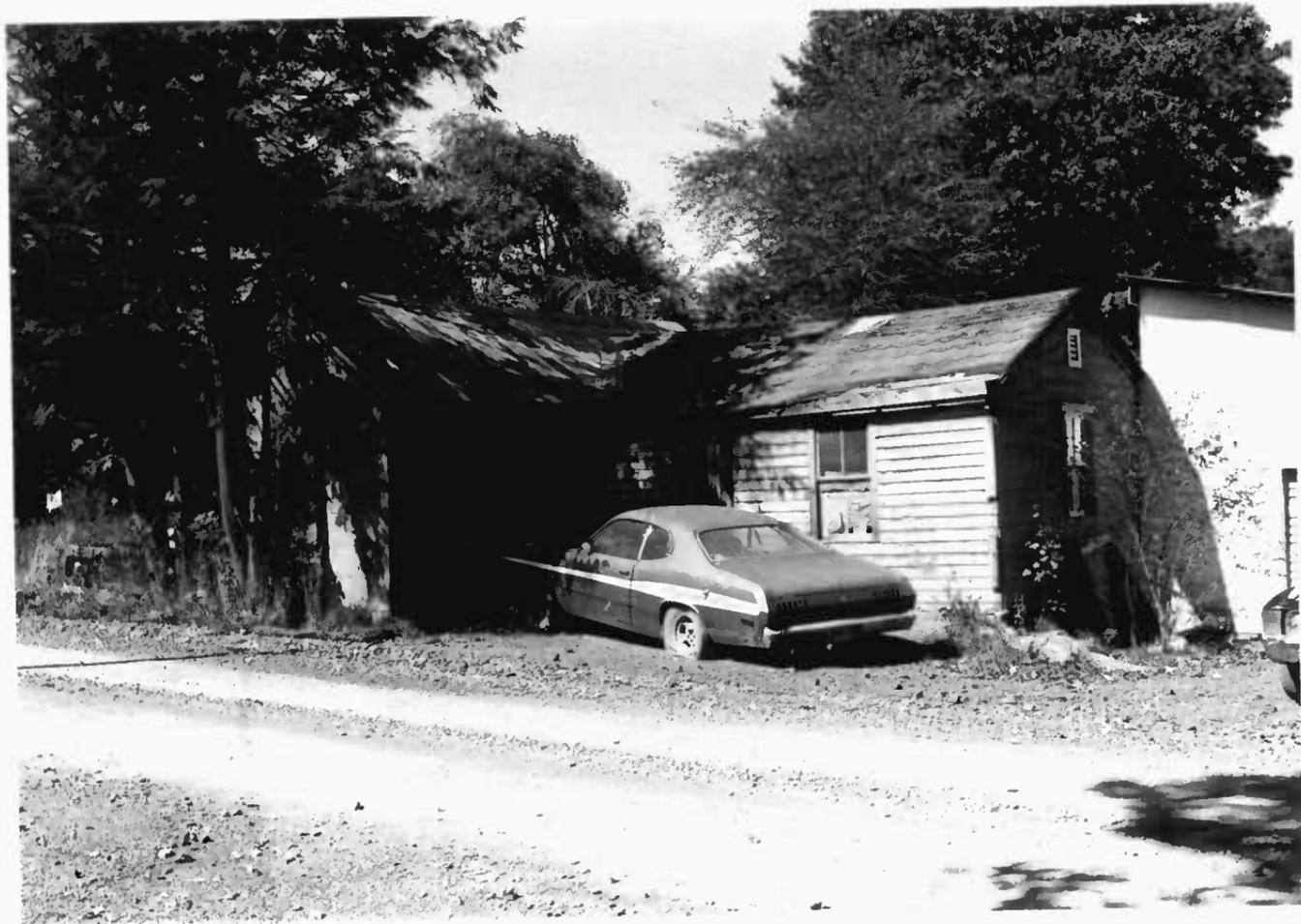
WILSON SURVEY DISTRICT
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND
AND GRANIT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

D. WARE

29 SEPT. 1980

4 (MD.)

BEAR N ELEVATION



G-V-A-090

WILSON SURVEY DISTRICT
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND
AND GRANT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

D. WARE

29 SEPT. 1980

#5 (MD.)

SE ELEVATION



G-V-A-090

WILSON SURVEY DISTRICT
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND
AND GRANT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

V. CESNA

29 SEPT. 1980

#6 (MD)

E ELEVATION + N GABLE END



G-V-A-090

WILSON SURVEY DISTRICT
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND
AND GRANT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

V. CESNA

29 SEPT. 1980

#7 (MD.)

N + E ELEVATIONS



G-U-A-090

WILSON SUBNEY DISTRICT

GARBETT COUNTY, MARYLAND

AND GRANT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

D WARE

29 SEPT. 1980

#8 (MD.)

FACADE: S ELEVATION



G-4-A-090

WILSON SURVEY DISTRICT
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND
AND GRANT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

D. WARE

29 SEPT. 1980

9 (MD.)

W ELEVATION



G-V-L-090

WILSON SURVEY DISTRICT

GARBETT COUNTY, MARYLAND

AND GRANT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

D. WARE

29 SEPT. 1980

#9 (MD)

S+E ELEVATIONS



G. V. A. 090

WILSON SENEY DISTRICT
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND
AND GRANT COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

V. CESNA

29 SEPT. 1980

#10 (MD.)

W ELEVATION