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MORGANTOWN HISTORY MUSEUM



useum News

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High Street Photograph Exhibit

A newly installed computer slide show at the Morgantown History Museum offers a unique view of Morgantown's High Street in the mid-twentieth century. The show contains over seventy slides created from black-and-white photographs taken in February, 1962. These images provide an almost complete record of now gone buildings and businesses that were located along the city's main shopping street.

The exhibit shows that before the first shopping mall opened in the Morgantown area, High Street was home to a variety of businesses offering almost all essential goods and services to city and area residents. Then, downtown visitors could choose from among four grocery stores, seven shoe stores, six beauty



The Fashion Corner and City Pharmacy

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shops, four jewelers, five pharmacies, sixteen clothing stores, two hardware stores, and several department stores.

The long list of businesses shown includes once well-known establishments such as Finn's, Sidler's, S. M. Whiteside, the High Street Market, McCrory's, McVicker's Drug Store, and the Morgantown Hardware Company. Among the documented structures that have since disappeared from Morgantown's streetscape are the buildings formerly housing Ramsey's Market, the Morgantown Radio Shop, the Sanitary Market, and the State Department of Employment Security.

The exhibit will be on display throughout the summer.

**Morgantown Museum
Commission**

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Pamela A. Ball

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Museum News Editor**

Michael Mackert

The Morgantown History Museum is the first city-sponsored museum in the Greater Morgantown area. Its mission is to preserve the history of the region for the public by collecting and displaying local cultural artifacts.

Morgantown History Museum
111 High Street
Morgantown, WV 26505
(304) 319-1800

morgantownmuseum@yahoo.com

Tuesday – Saturday
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Greetings from the Chair

Dear Friends,

The Morgantown Museum Commission (MMC) and the Morgantown History Museum (MHM) developed a multi-level grassroots plan to increase visitation for the museum facility and to raise awareness about the museum effort. Phase I of the plan involved producing in-house and off-site mini-exhibits. These exhibits have covered a four-year span from 2006 to 2010. In phase II the MHM also began participating in one county and numerous city events. Last year, for example, we presented mini-exhibits on the following occasions:

- Mon River Summit – April
- Chocolate Lovers' Day – April
- Arts on the River – June
- Greenmont Block Party – June
- Kids' Day – July
- Mountainfest – July
- Mason-Dixon Festival – September
- Mason-Dixon Historical Park, Buckwheat Day – October
- Arts Walk – October
- Cookie Quest – November

Our current phase III of the grassroots plan has included giving museum tours and on- and off-site presentations about the museum to organized groups in our community. Thus far, the following organizations have taken advantage of this service:

- Cub Scouts
- Mountainview Daisy Girl Scouts
- D.A.R.
- WVU Intensive English Program Students
- WVU Graduate History Students
- Tanner Book Club

Additional presentations will be given to the Monongalia County Historical Society, the Rotary Club, and University High School students later this year.

The MMC and MHM look at these events as wonderful PR opportunities for sharing some local history with the public. If your organization would like a presentation about the Morgantown History Museum effort, please give us a call at (304) 319-1800.

Pamela A. Ball
Chairperson, Morgantown Museum Commission
Coordinator, Morgantown History Museum

Featured Permanent Exhibit: Morgan Shirt Company

The Morgan Shirt Company factory was formerly located in the Sabraton section of Morgantown. It was constructed around 1914 and initially housed the Standard Glass Specialty Company. From 1929 on, the plant served as a manufacturing site for the Charles Greenberg Shirt Factory of New York City.

After the Greenberg company had left in 1936, the Raritan Shirt Company of Perth Amboy, New Jersey took over the facility in 1937. The Morgantown Shirt Company was subsequently organized as a section of Raritan. During World War II, the company mainly produced uniforms.



Morgan Shirt Company

In the 1950s it changed its focus to high fashion and semi-custom shirt production. Among others, its customers included Calvin Klein, Brooks Brothers, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Abercrombie & Fitch. In 1994, the company went into bankruptcy and eventually closed its doors in 1996. The shirt factory was demolished in 2001.

During the time of its operation, the company occupied three buildings on its premises. Two structures were dedicated to the manufacturing process. One of these was reserved for pattern making and fabric cutting. The other one, a two-

story building, contained units making fronts, collars, cuff, sleeves, and backs on its second floor. The first floor of this building was occupied by assembling, pressing, and finishing units. The third structure served as a warehouse.



Automated sewing machine

Several operations were involved in making a shirt. The parts of a shirt were cut from fabric with patterns and cutters or with dies. Cuffs and collars were made by utilizing heat to shape or to join their components parts. Then all parts were assembled with sewing machines. A finished shirt was then pressed with an iron and packaged for shipping.



Dies for cutting parts of shirts

To learn more about the Morgan Shirt Company, visit the museum. The shirt factory exhibit includes photographs, patterns, dies, an automated sewing machine using memory chips, and shirts.

New Acquisitions

Initial Perforator

Machines of this type were used to perforate initials into hat bands. This enabled hat owners to identify their hats easily. The wooden handle in front of the machine is attached to a dial containing all the letters of the alphabet. By turning the handle, the machine operator could choose a hat owner's initials and then perforate the hat band with the initials. The machine in the museum's possession was made by the B. F. Cummins Company of Chicago, Illinois at the turn of the nineteenth century.



Carpet Stretcher



E. W. Bullard, a well-known Massachusetts inventor, designed this tool, which was patented to him in 1872. The carpet stretcher was then produced by George S. Knapp, a hardware specialties manufacturer based in Bridgeport, Massachusetts, and was widely marketed as "Bullard's Improved Carpet Stretcher." A 1908 Sears Roebuck catalog described the tool as "simple in construction and powerful, easy to operate and is warranted not to injure the finest carpet. It holds the carpet in position after it is drawn to its proper place, giving the operator the free use of both hands with which to do the nailing."

Typewriter

This machine, a Royal 10, was manufactured by the Royal Typewriter Company of Hartford, Connecticut. Royal 10 models were first produced in 1914 and had two beveled glass panels on either side. The typewriter owned by the museum is a later version of the Royal 10 and features only one beveled glass panel on each side. Production of this later model began in 1923. The typewriter's serial number suggests that it was probably built in 1927.



To stay informed about the latest events and exhibits at the Morgantown History Museum, visit our website at www.MorgantownHistoryMuseum.org or our page on www.facebook.com.

Thank You for Your Support!

We would like to thank the following individuals, families, organizations, and local government bodies for their volunteer work and/or their generous contributions to the Morgantown History Museum:

American Red Cross –
River Valley Chapter
Appalachian Education Initiative
Pamela Ball
BOPARC
Boston Beanery
Julie Bryan
City of Morgantown
Classic Furniture
Comcast
Downes Family
Foreman Family
Forks of Cheat Winery
Friends of the Morgantown
History Museum
Greater Morgantown Community Trust

Linda and Michael Hall
Scott Mathews
Richard McEwuen
Monongalia County Commission
Morgantown Area Chamber
of Commerce
Melvin Rexroad
Nan Shean Shaffer
Harold Shaver
George A. Smyth
Harry Swisher
Tina Tallaksen
Stephen and Rita Tanner
WAJR
WCLG
Tim Wiltshire

Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Morgantown History Museum

The meeting will take place in the conference room at the museum on Wednesday, May 19, 2010 at 7:00 p. m. Among other items, the agenda will include the election of officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer) for the next year.

Membership Application

The Morgantown Museum Commission invites you to join the Friends of Morgantown History Museum to help promote and preserve the rich history of Morgantown and the surrounding area.

\$25.00 Individual _____

\$30.00 Family _____

\$50.00 Corporate _____

Additional Contributions:
\$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone (h) _____

(w) _____

Mail to:

Friends of the Morgantown History Museum
111 High Street
Morgantown, WV 26505-5412

To donate objects or to volunteer some time, please contact the Morgantown Museum Commission at (304) 319-1800 or at morgantownmuseum@yahoo.com.

WANTED: Sterling Faucet Artifacts

We are still looking for artifacts from the Sterling Faucet Company. If you own any products or memorabilia from this company, please consider donating them to the Morgantown History Museum.

Preserving Morgantown's Cultural Heritage