

The New Home

After the old steam engine burned a hole in the floor and nearly fell into the bank, the *Sentinel* needed a new home. The new building was next door to the Hunt Hotel. There was a window between the *Sentinel* composing room and the hotel kitchen. Mattie Long, head cook at the hotel, was an amiable soul and would pass leftover pies through the window to the girls in the composing room. Charley Marvin had a nose as keen as a hunting dog which often led him to the composing room just in time to get a slice of the pie.

The double front doors of the *Sentinel* office opened into all the activity. There was no feeling of spaciousness. A partition separated the front and the back offices, as they were called. A railing, with an entrance midway, marked off the editorial sanctum.

Editor Marvin had a roll-top desk at the rear and on top sat a weird filing cabinet consisting of hundreds of little boxes in which small pamphlets and letters could easily be lost. On one side of the desk was a hook on which the editor hung proofs. On the other side, on the floor, was a giant wastebasket, always overflowing. The editorial chair, an old-time swivel model, some-

times threatened to go over backwards. A swinging shelf, at one side of the desk, carried the double keyboard typewriter, an old Smith Premier, incredibly dirty.

Charley's helper sat at a kitchen variety table nearby when he was not uptown trying to persuade reluctant merchants to use bigger *Sentinel* advertisements. Mondays and Thursdays Charley was not there. On those days he went to Faragut and Essex to call on the merchants, preachers, doctors, and lawyers for news. Later he added Clarinda, the county seat and Shenandoah's bitter rival, to his schedule.

The gasoline engine was optimistically installed in the new building. But it continued to have cantankerous spells. Even Wallace Ross, who could fix anything, failed when he tackled the mulish engine.

The next venture was a water motor. It worked as guaranteed but used more water than the Mount Arbor Nurseries did for irrigation. It emptied the town water tower the first night. It needed a Niagara Falls to furnish enough water to run. The *Sentinel* kept it one month.

Then electric motors came in and Marvin bought the first one in town. It ran at night only, as there was no daytime power. Marvin sold the old water motor for junk.

Many small town weeklies had a handy way of saving work and expense. They used patent in-

sides. Instead of buying blank newsprint, they purchased paper which was already printed on one side. Thus only one trip through the press was necessary. Marvin took pride in starting the *Sentinel* with all home print in 1887, and he kept it up through the rest of his life.

After the papers emerged from the press, inky, and sometimes slightly askew, they had to be folded by hand. Often a school girl could be hired cheaply for this job. After a few years the editor's daughter, just two weeks older than the *Sentinel*, took over this task after school in the afternoon.

There were no Linotype machines then. Type was set by hand, usually by a girl who sat on a high stool and placed the type, letter by letter and line by line, in the compositor's stick she held in her hand.

One of Charley Marvin's assistants was A. S. Bailey, who had been an Iowa editor when Charley was still a boy in short pants playing in the woods near Alum Creek. Although Bailey spent long hours at his old typewriter, he would lend a hand at running the little job press when work stacked up in the composing room. He did not care much for this job. He would bring in the finished product, grumbling, "Here are your letterheads. I don't see what's your hurry. They're only two days late."

Bailey had one failing. He had an uncanny trait for getting the paper into trouble while try-

ing to do good for someone. Once it was necessary to call in a lawyer to keep the *Sentinel* out of a libel suit. But one of the happy memories is the staff's observance of Bailey's 75th birthday. It all came about because Editor Marvin had asked Bailey to write the story of his life for the paper.

On that day there was an unusual air of activity about the *Sentinel* office. Bailey could not understand it. Harry Knight, the foreman, was tearing around like a young colt, and even Millie Fletcher, who wrote society and collected bills, was helping in the back office. Bailey was anxious to help, so he was given some proofs to take to the Andrews store. When the old man returned, half an hour later, the office staff was lined up in the front room — Editor Marvin, Foreman Harry Knight, Millie Fletcher, and Jimmy. Even the office cat came to see what was happening. Bailey looked from person to person in bewilderment. Then Knight spoke up:

Mr. Bailey, the *Sentinel* folks all wanted to do something for your birthday, so here's the story of your life in book form. Whenever a chapter ran in the paper we came back or stayed overtime to print it on book-size sheets. Mr. Marvin wanted to help so he sent 'em out to be bound. The first books just came and we had to get you out of the way so we could print some jackets. Here's the first dozen. There's 300 altogether, for you to sell or give to your friends.

Old Man Bailey reached out to take the book, but

he could not see it. His eyes were far too misty.

Politics was an obsession with newspaper editors around the turn of the century. Editor Marvin plunged headlong into the battle. Every day he wrote columns against the Democratic administration and every night he joined enthusiastically in Republican rallies.

Almost everybody took part in the rallies. Even the women were getting into the game. A battle of the decade developed between two women — Kittie Laws and Lottie Granger. Both were candidates for county superintendent of schools, and they knew how to organize support. Modern politicians could take lessons from them. It was 30 years before women had the vote, too. Marvin was in that fight. It was a natural for him. His mother was an ardent believer in suffrage for women from the time Carrie Chapman Catt first unfurled her banners.

As campaign time arrived, lining up the voters became more important than getting the news. While Marvin did not want to run for office himself, he was always working to help elect someone else. The campaign of 1896 reached a new high. Bryan, the silver-voiced orator from Nebraska, stirred up a demand for free silver. McKinley, calm and dignified, rallied the conservatives around his banner. The Democratic slogan was "sixteen-to-one" and local leaders scouted the countryside seeking 16 white horses and one black

to lead the parade, symbolizing the 16 parts of silver to one of gold. Beautiful young ladies were enlisted to ride the horses. McKinley won on a gold standard and high tariff platform.

McKinley defeated Bryan again in 1900 but did not hold office long. On September 6, 1901, he was shot by Leon Czolgosz, and the first extra of the *Sentinel's* career told of the assassination.

Election night was always an occasion of great suspense and excitement. There were no radio reports and no voting machines for quick tallies of votes from larger towns. The *Sentinel* office was the center where politicians gathered. Big sheets of paper had been prepared in advance and the office soon filled with cigar smoke as the watchers waited impatiently for the telephoned returns to be recorded. Excitement built up as first figures came in but, amazingly, there was little betting — just a few freakish bets, such as not shaving for a month.

Marvin wrote the figures on the big chart with heavy black crayon. Then he posted it in the window for passersby to see. None of those in attendance thought of going home until the last precinct was heard from.

Marvin was often urged to run for office. Republican adherents assured him he could win in a walk. He would have none of it. His only reward for years of ardent political labor was the postmastership. A highly prized plum, the job

was given to one of the more active supporters with each change of administration. The appointment was for four years, and the incumbent usually was reappointed unless there was a change in the party in power. Marvin found the salary was attractive and, besides, he could divide his time between the post office and the paper.

When Marvin began his duties, the office was located in a narrow, shabby old store building on the main street. With the rise of nurseries and seed houses, the business of the Shenandoah post office multiplied at a tremendous rate. It advanced from third to second class, and the old store building was outgrown. There was an appropriation for a new building. Marvin's salary went up, too. He saved the money and it helped pay for a new *Sentinel* Building later.

Free mail delivery came in during Marvin's administration. There were two carriers at first. The real thrill came with rural free delivery. A few forward-looking farmers had dreamed of free delivery to bring the letters and newspapers to their homes. The idea was deemed so visionary that even the papers did not mention it. An ambitious farmer, hearing that an experiment might be tried, visited his neighbor; and they prepared and sent a petition to the postmaster general asking for an experimental route at Shenandoah.

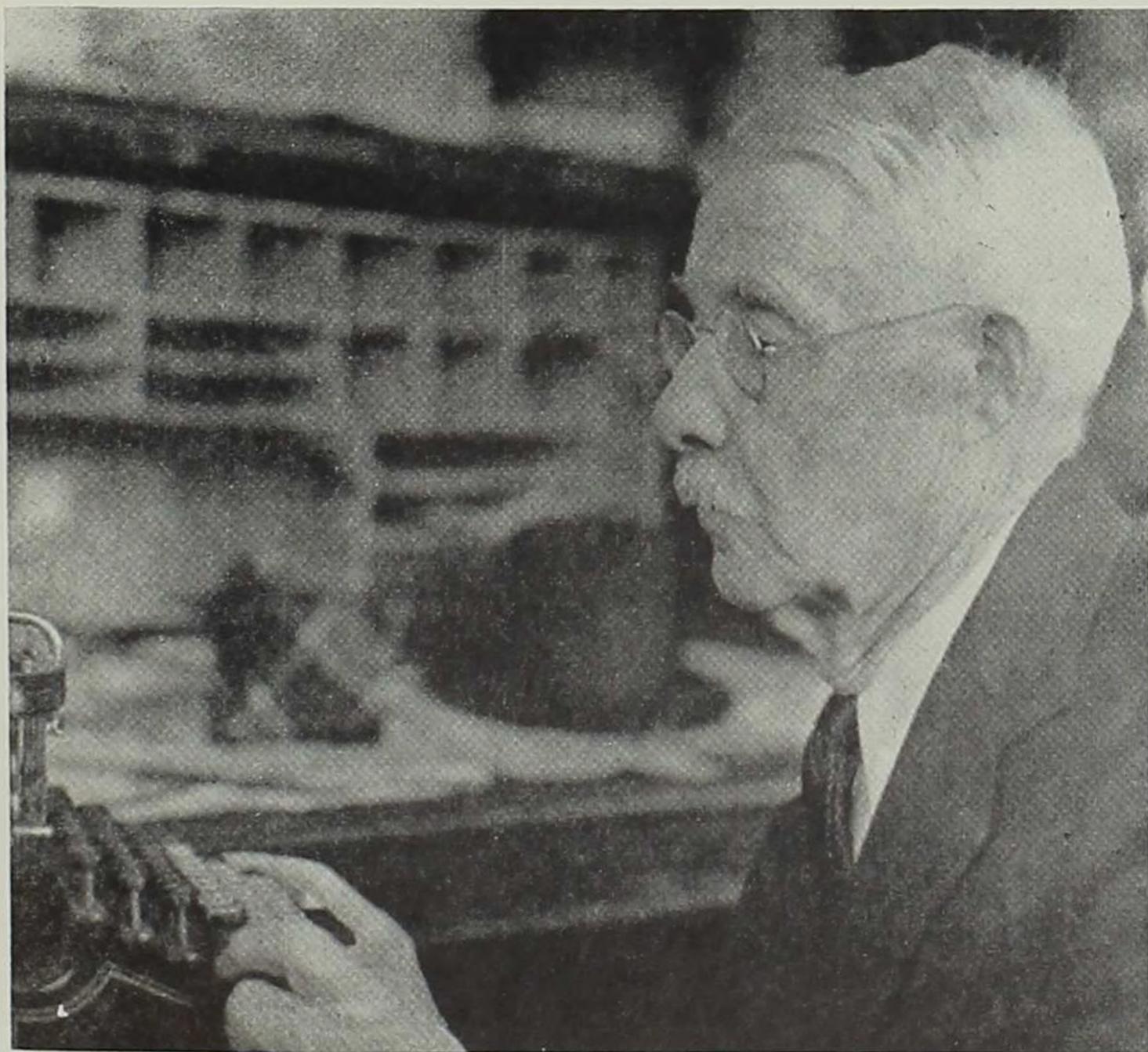
Several months later, a stranger arrived in town and asked to see the postmaster. Marvin had not



CHARLES MARVIN
(The year he started the *Sentinel*)

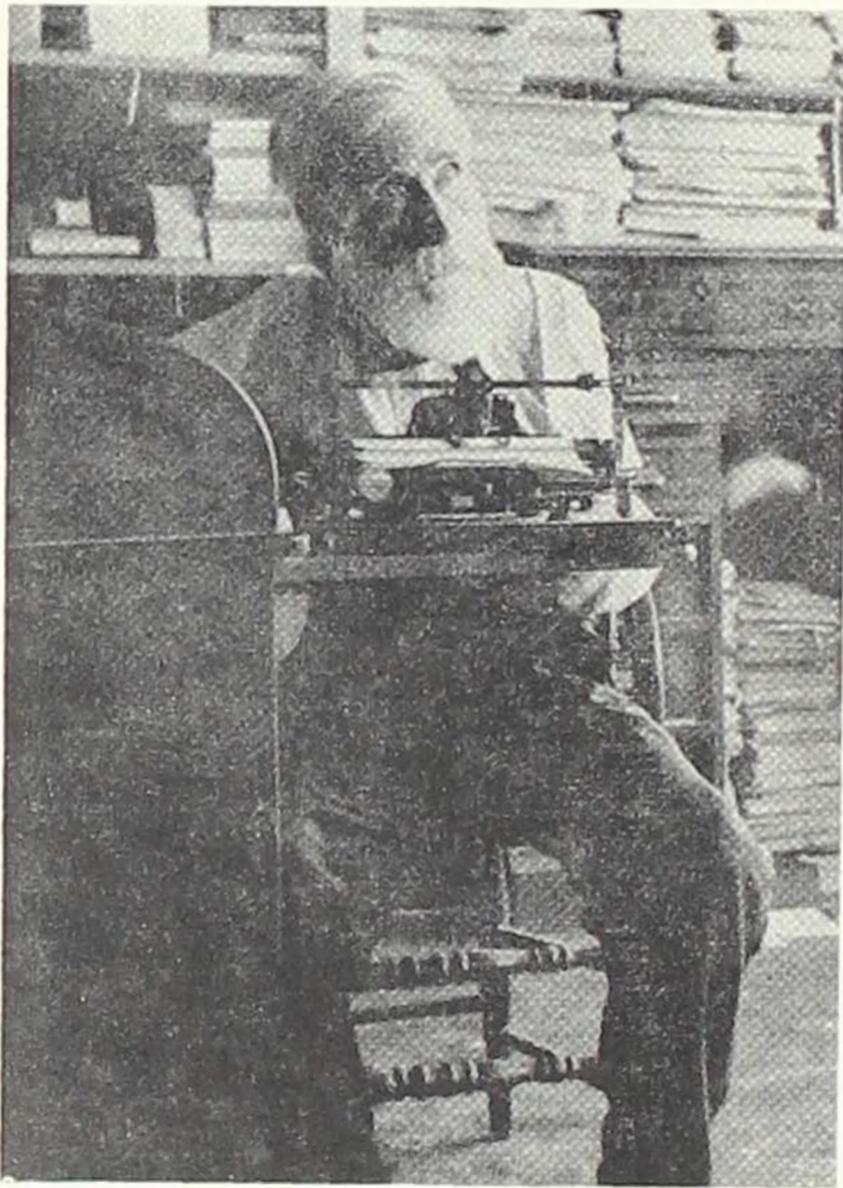


BERTHA McCAUSLAND MARVIN
(Loyal helpmate of Charles Marvin)

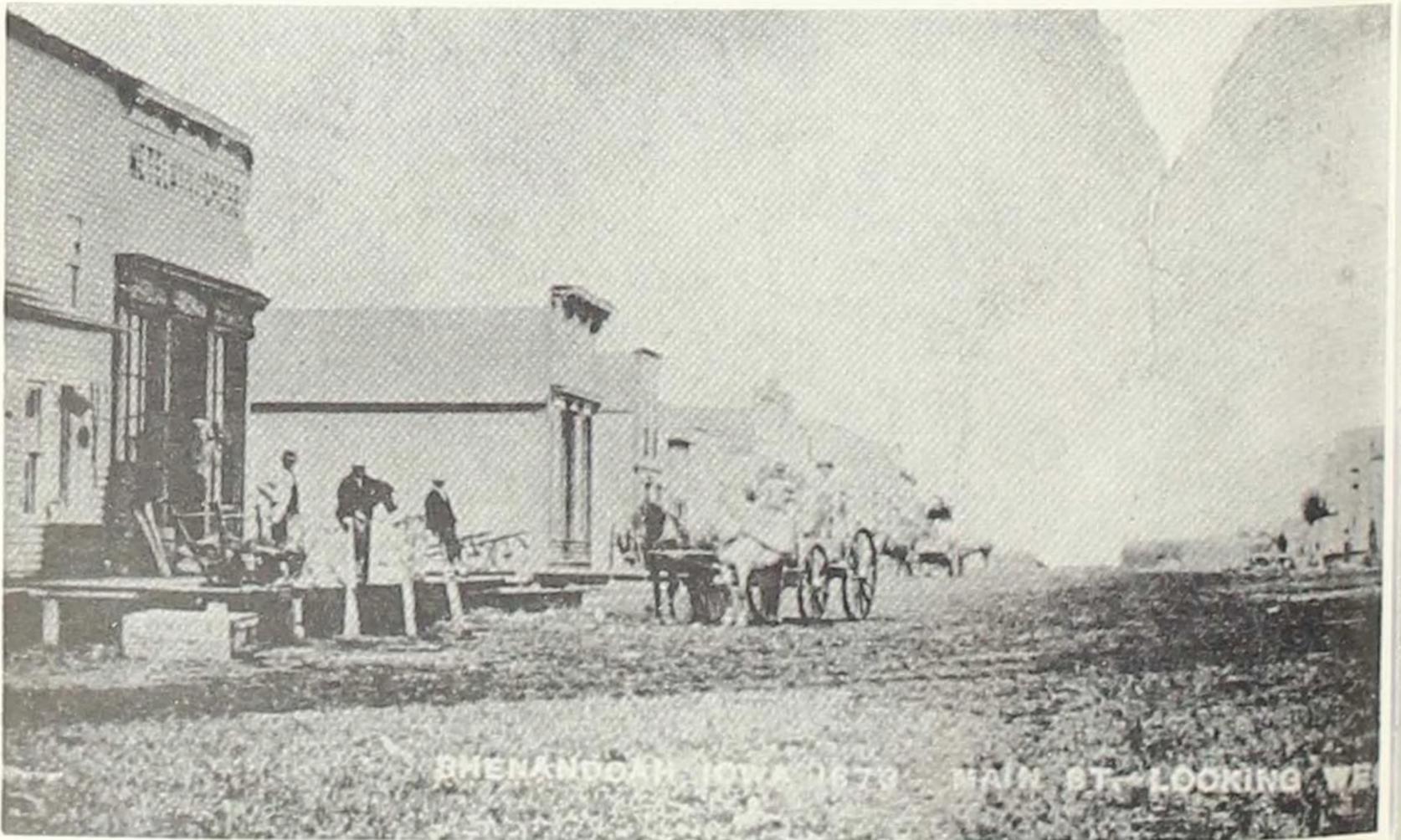


Photos courtesy Merze M. Seeburger

C. N. Marvin—Master Editor-Publisher Award—1941. He had “worked hard—lived honorably—thought soundly—influenced unselfishly.” Marvin had served Shenandoah 54 years as founder and editor of the *Sentinel*.



A. S. BAILEY, pioneer newspaperman, went to work as usual at the *Sentinel* on his 75th birthday. Nobody seemed aware of his presence and it seemed to him they felt he was in their way. He was sure the numerous petty jobs which took him away from the office that day were simply manufactured and only meant that he was about to be sacked. Instead, the *Sentinel* staff had secretly had his reminiscences specially printed and bound in book form as a surprise birthday gift. The 75th proved to be just about Bailey's happiest birthday!



Photos courtesy Merze M. Seeburger

Shenandoah was christened on August 6, 1870, upon completion of the first house by I. N. Holcomb. It received its name from the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, and its principal street was named Sheridan after the famous Civil War general. The settlers from Manti moved to Shenandoah following the arrival of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad.



Photo courtesy Mrs. J. E. Hawkins

Sheridan Avenue, looking west of Elm Street in horse and buggy days. The domed building on the corner has always been a landmark to citizens and visitors alike.



Photo courtesy Shenandoah Sentinel

Sheridan Avenue in horseless carriage days. The 80-foot wide street was laid out in the original plat, thus assuring ample parking and two-way traffic in modern Shenandoah.

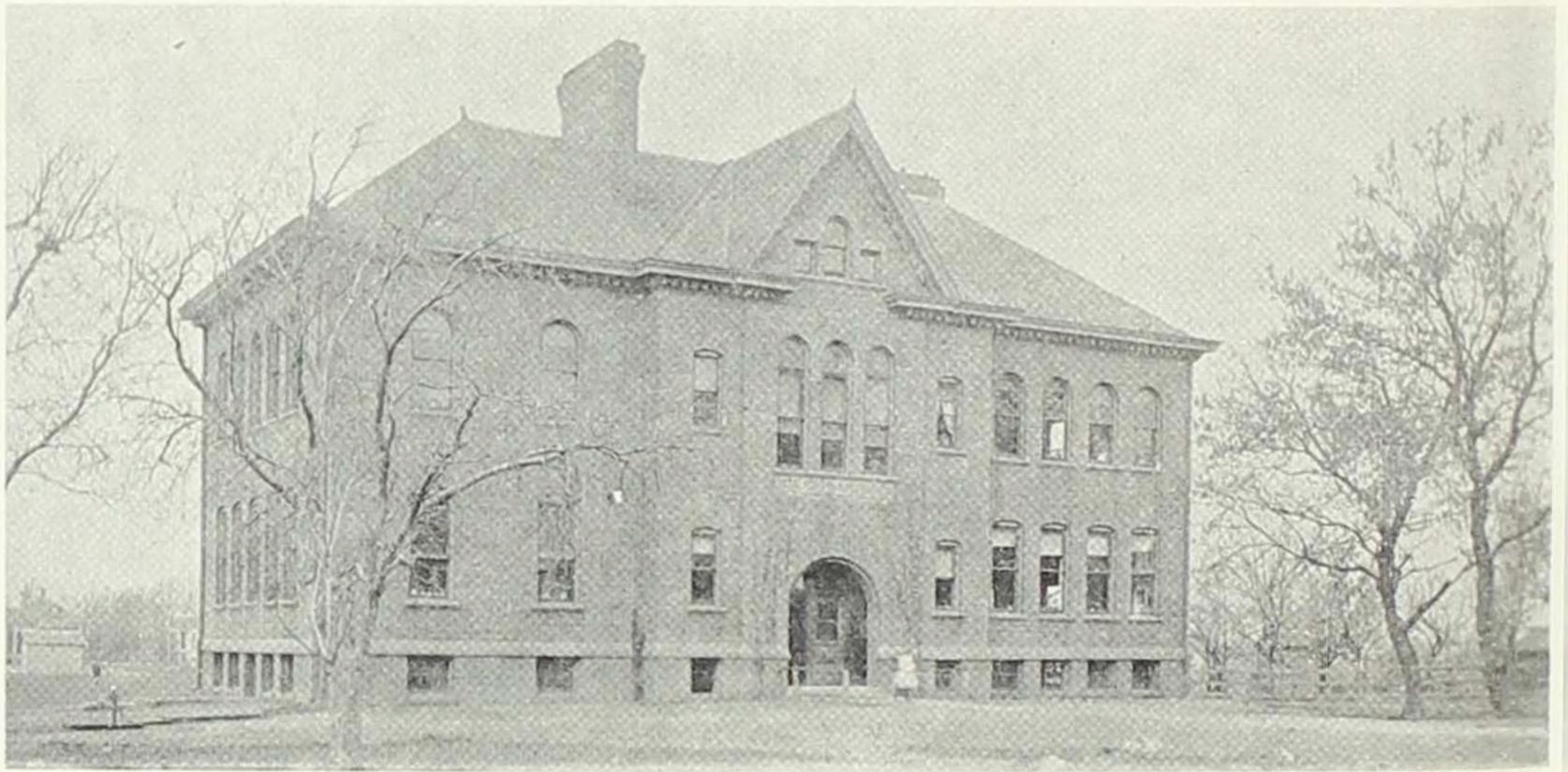


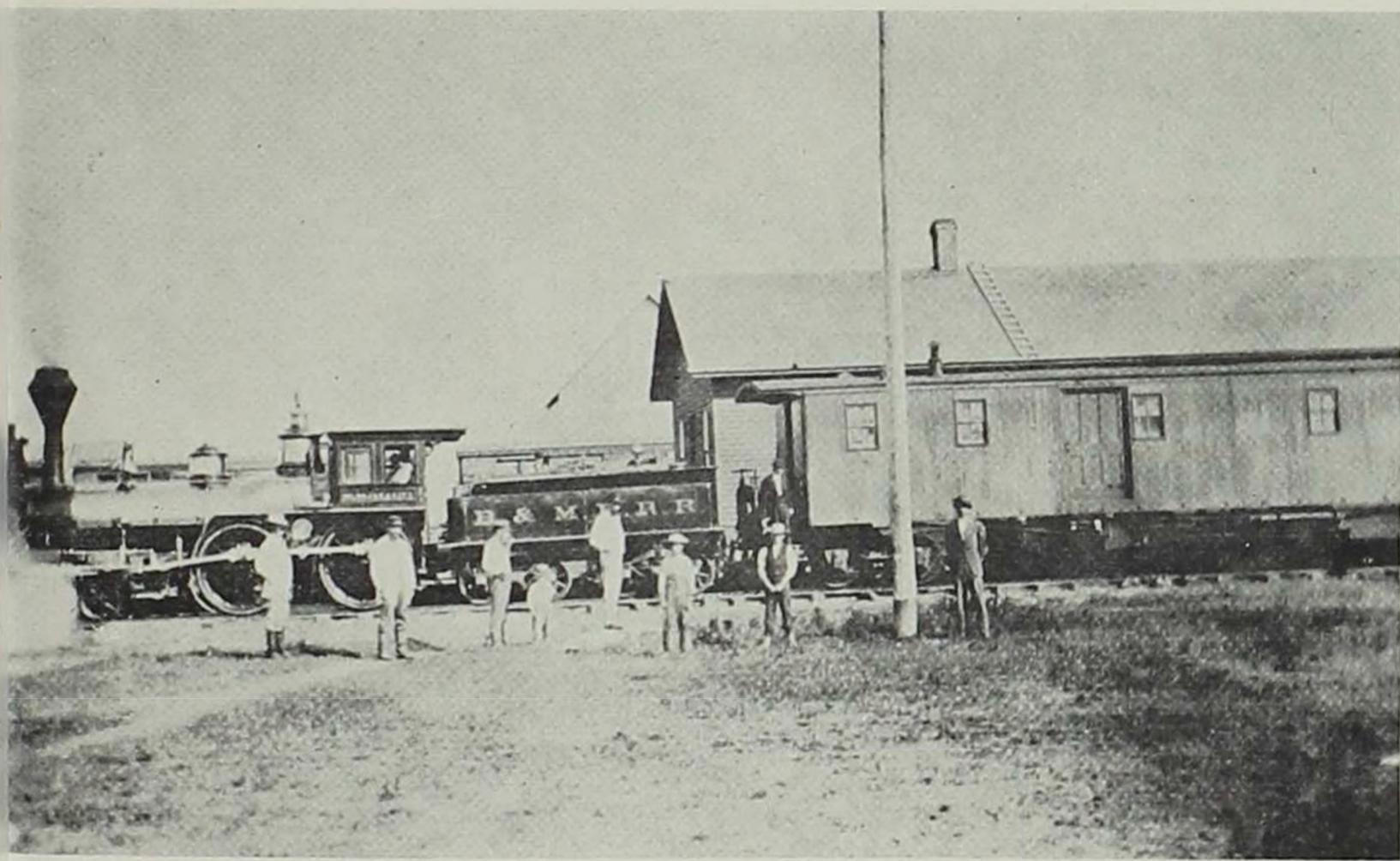
Photo courtesy Mrs. J. E. Hawkins

Broad Street Grade School was completed in the fall of 1904 at a cost of \$10,000. Education has always been of primary importance and the 4-room school relieved pressure on Shenandoah High School. The first school was taught in 1870-71 by Mrs. S. E. Field in a 12 x 14-foot room containing but one window.

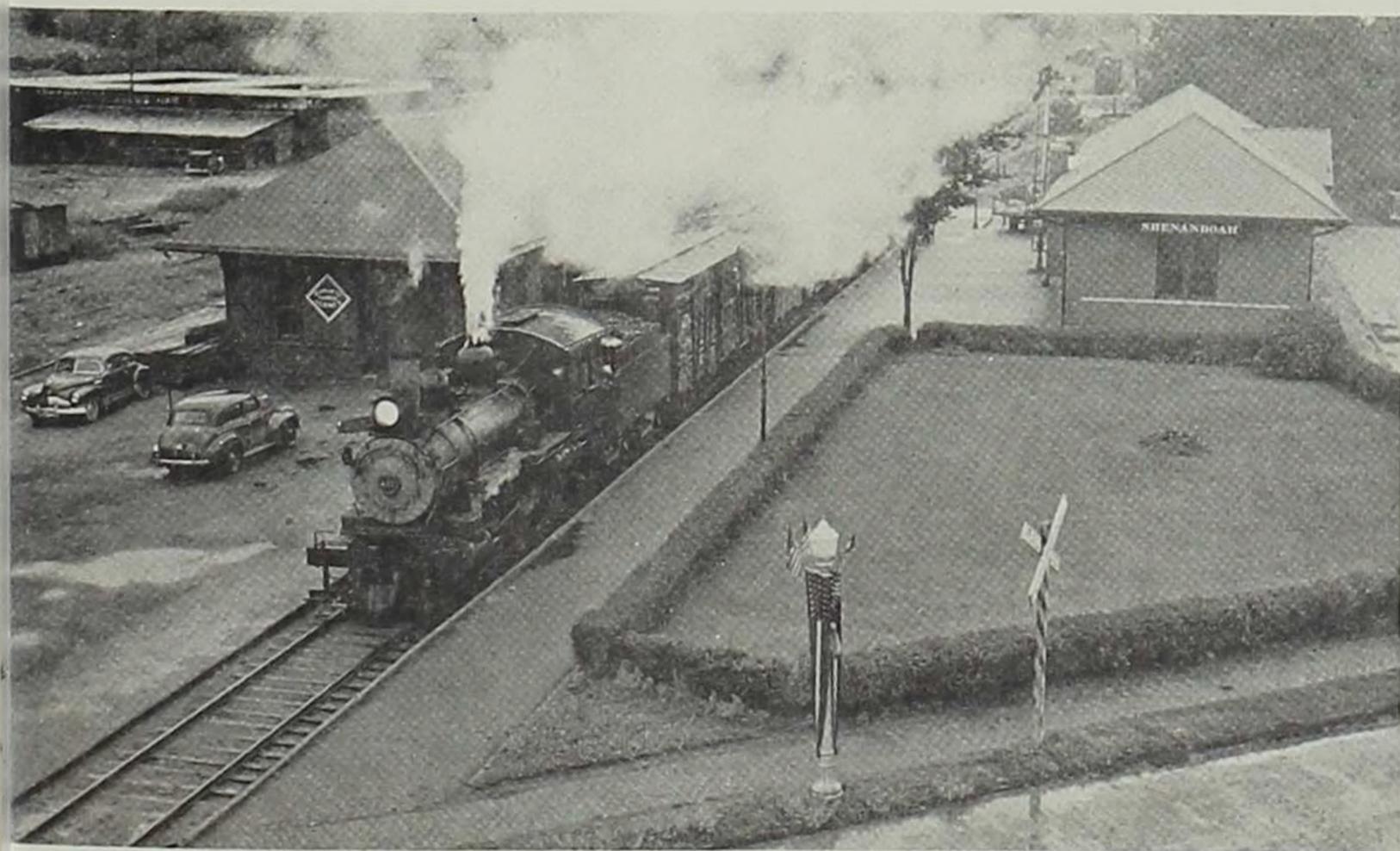


Photo courtesy Shenandoah Sentinel

Shenandoah was proud of Western Normal College, a 4-story brick structure completed at an estimated cost of \$30,000 in the fall of 1882. Building and its contents were destroyed by fire in December, 1891. Nearly \$50,000 was raised and this, with insurance money, built the new structure (pictured above) opened in 1893. Enrollment soared to 650 students in 1911-12. Fire hit again on April 12, 1917, and the college closed. The class of 1917 finished the year in the Methodist Church basement. Insurance of \$25,000 was used to build a new high school.

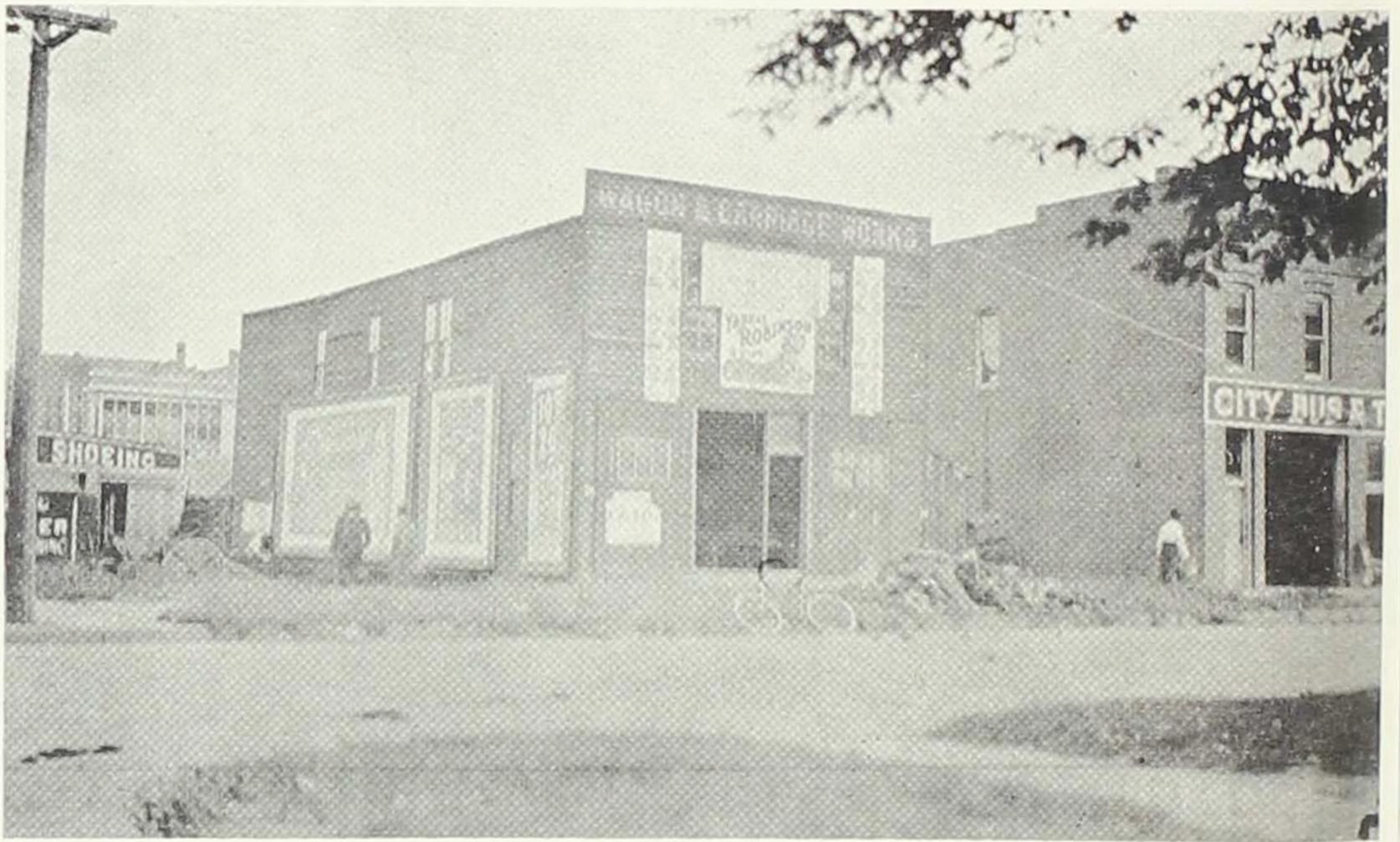


The Burlington & Missouri Rail Road ran the first train through Shenandoah on August 1, 1870. The Chicago, Burlington & Quincy and Wabash lines still carry freight for Shenandoah industries. The Wabash became a part of Norfolk & Western in 1964.



Photos courtesy Shenandoah Sentinel

A C. B. & Q. freight train passes the Shenandoah station in 1946. A boulder in the small park area marks the spot where President Theodore Roosevelt made a speech on April 8, 1903. Shenandoah has no passenger service today.



There was business for a Wagon & Carriage Works until well into the 20th Century. The Economy Stock Powder Company is now located on this site.



Photos courtesy Shenandoah Sentinel

S. P. Carpenter operated the first lodging house in 1870 where the Delmonico now stands. He built the Shenandoah House on the same site, claiming it to be "the finest hotel in Page County." The town boasted one hotel and two restaurants in 1875. The Valley House, an early Shenandoah hotel, was erected in 1880. By 1897 such hotels as the Delmonico, Hunt, and Shenandoah, attracted a large share of the traveling public in southwestern Iowa.

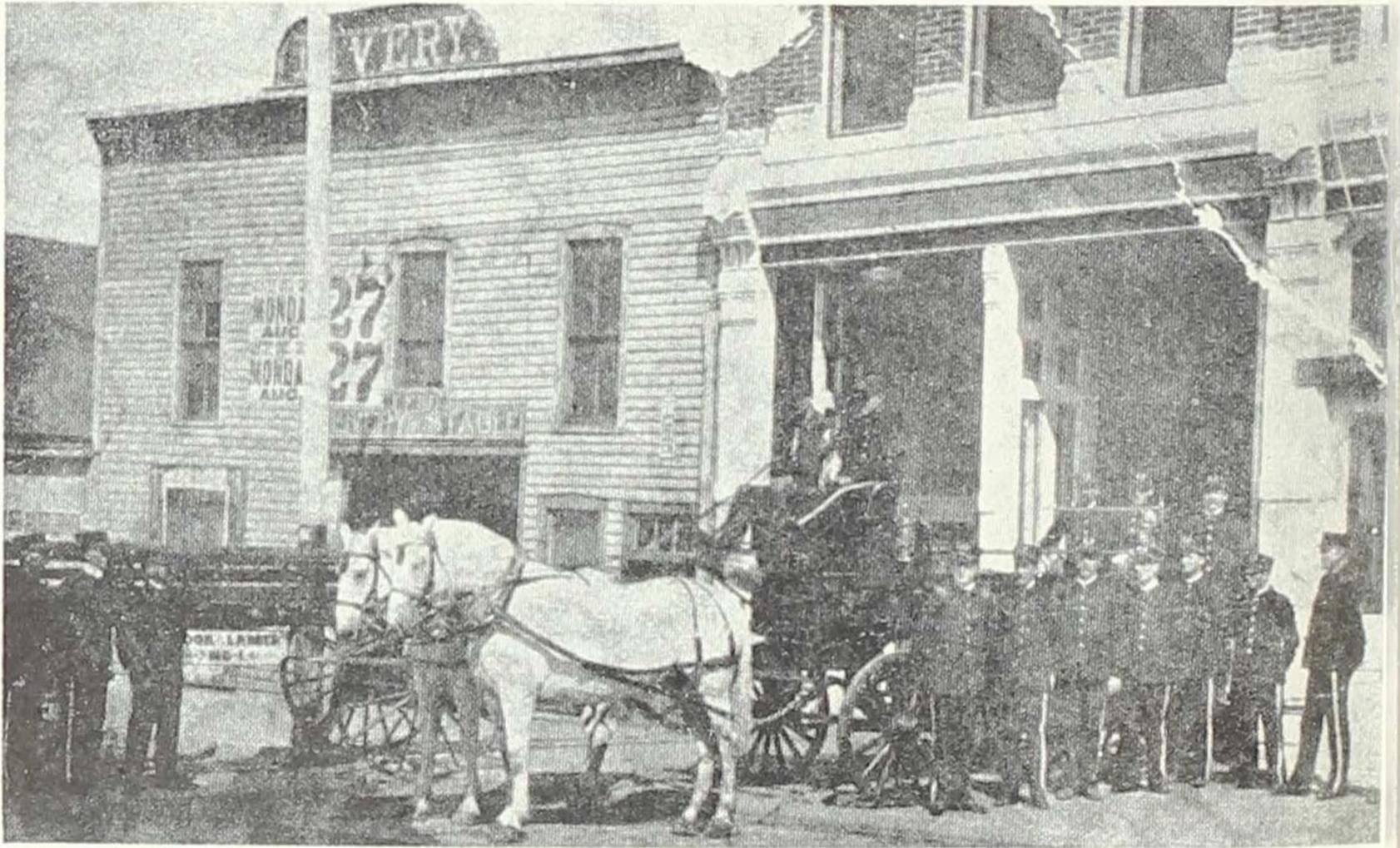


Civil War members of the 23rd Regiment, Iowa Infantry Volunteers, gathered for a reunion in Shenandoah.

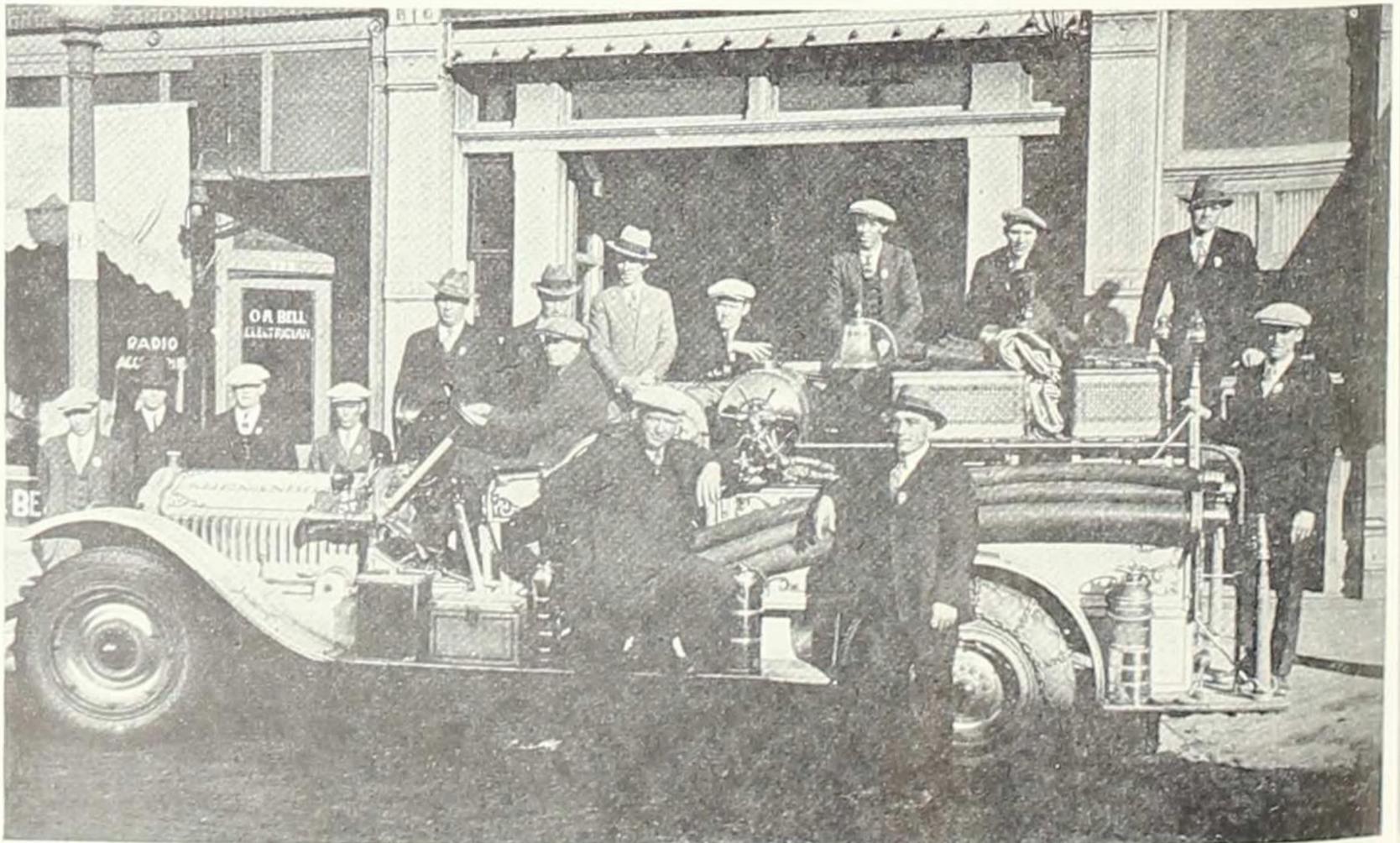


Photos courtesy Vetta L. Johnson

Co. E of the 51st Iowa Infantry Spanish-American War veterans hold a reunion in Shenandoah. Colonel C. V. Mount, a veteran of the Civil War, commanded this company.



The Shenandoah Fire Department. The town secured its first fire apparatus in 1876. In 1877 the City Council limited the fire company to 25 members. In 1878 a hook and ladder building was fixed up for \$25. In 1880 the fire department was described as "inefficient" and "practically useless." A fire engine was purchased in 1883 for \$1,500. A hose cart, fire hats, rubber coats, lanterns, spray nozzle, and an iron triangle fire alarm had been acquired by 1884. It was not until 1906 that Shenandoah provided for a paid fire department.



Photos courtesy Shenandoah Sentinel

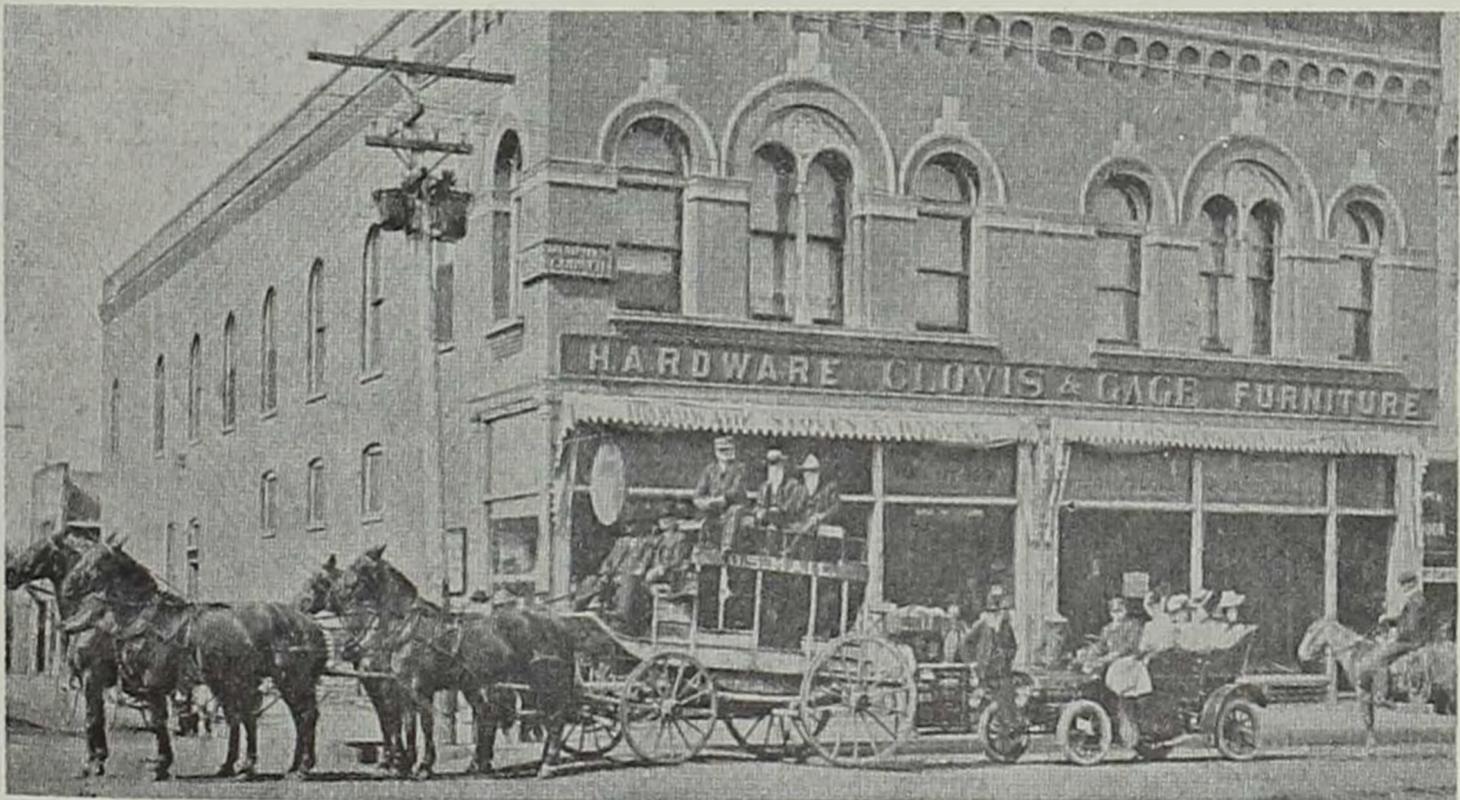
Shenandoah's new fire truck. The word "Radio" instead of "Livery" indicates a different era. Note chains on back wheel for muddy streets. Whenever fire equipment is brought out, old or new, it always seems to attract an interested crowd.



The Shenandoah Fair Association was incorporated in 1879. Harness racing was a popular sport.



Shenandoah's fire horses always ranked high at the Firemen's Tournament race. The Fourth of July was a popular time to hold such races.



State Historical Society Photo Collection

The United States Mail ready to move by stage coach in 1912. Old Dobbin was still the most dependable means of travel and continued to be until Iowa began to pull itself out of the mud a decade later. The U.S. Mail was still a novelty in a parade.

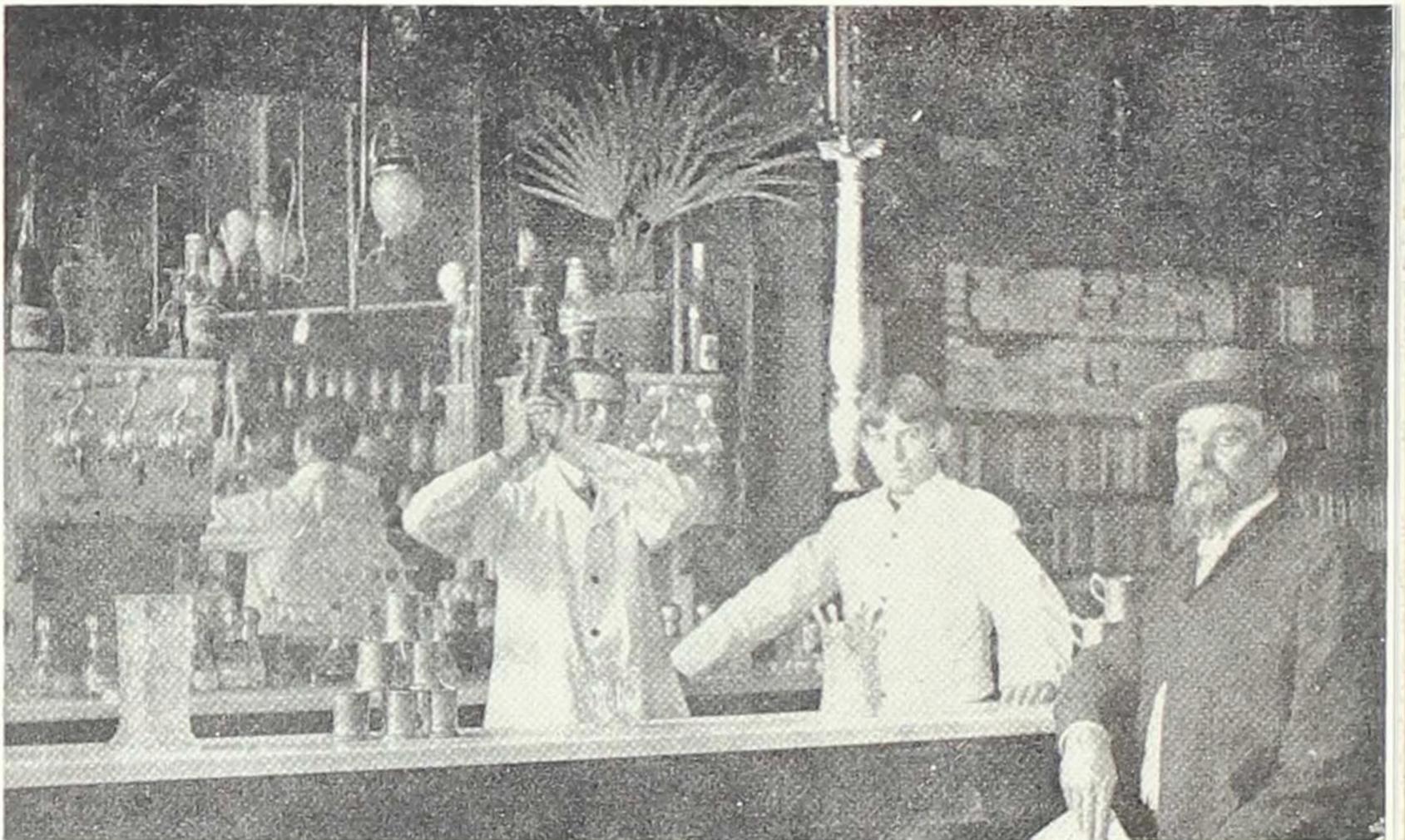


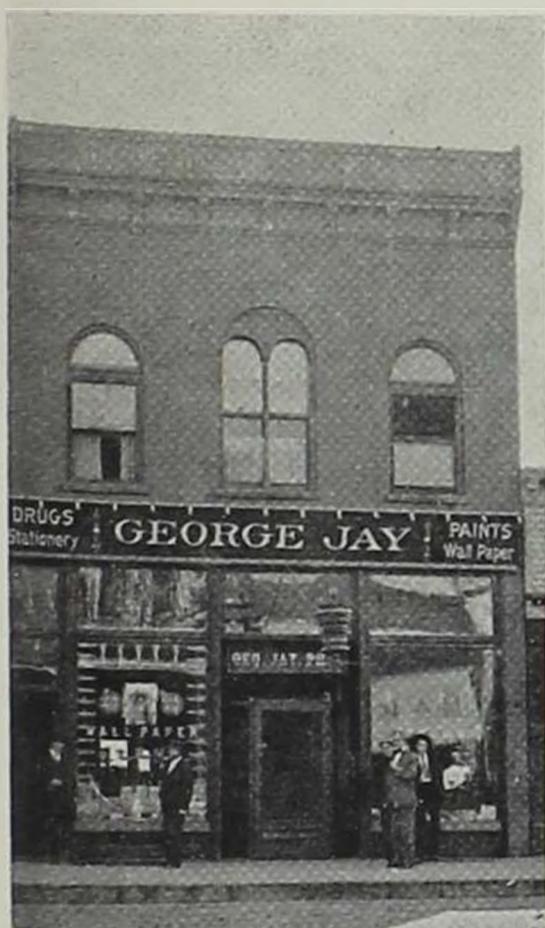
Photo courtesy F. M. Braley

Soda jerks earned their money making a chocolate malt at the Jay Drug Store. Sundaes and sodas of many kinds were also served in tempting form.



State Historical Society Photo Collection

A postcard advertisement from Bauer's Bargain Store informed citizens it had an "endless variety" of such things as "Fall Dress Fabrics, Dry Goods, Blankets, Comforts, Underwear, Yarns, Furs and What Not. You will be tickled to death with our prices."



George Jay's Drug Store welcomes a couple of cash customers. Dutch Treat or not, both seemed plump and well-satisfied.



Photos courtesy F. M. Braley

John Jay and George S. Jay, sons of the druggist, propelled themselves about town on a two-wheeled bicycle. The bicycle era found many devotees in Shenandoah.



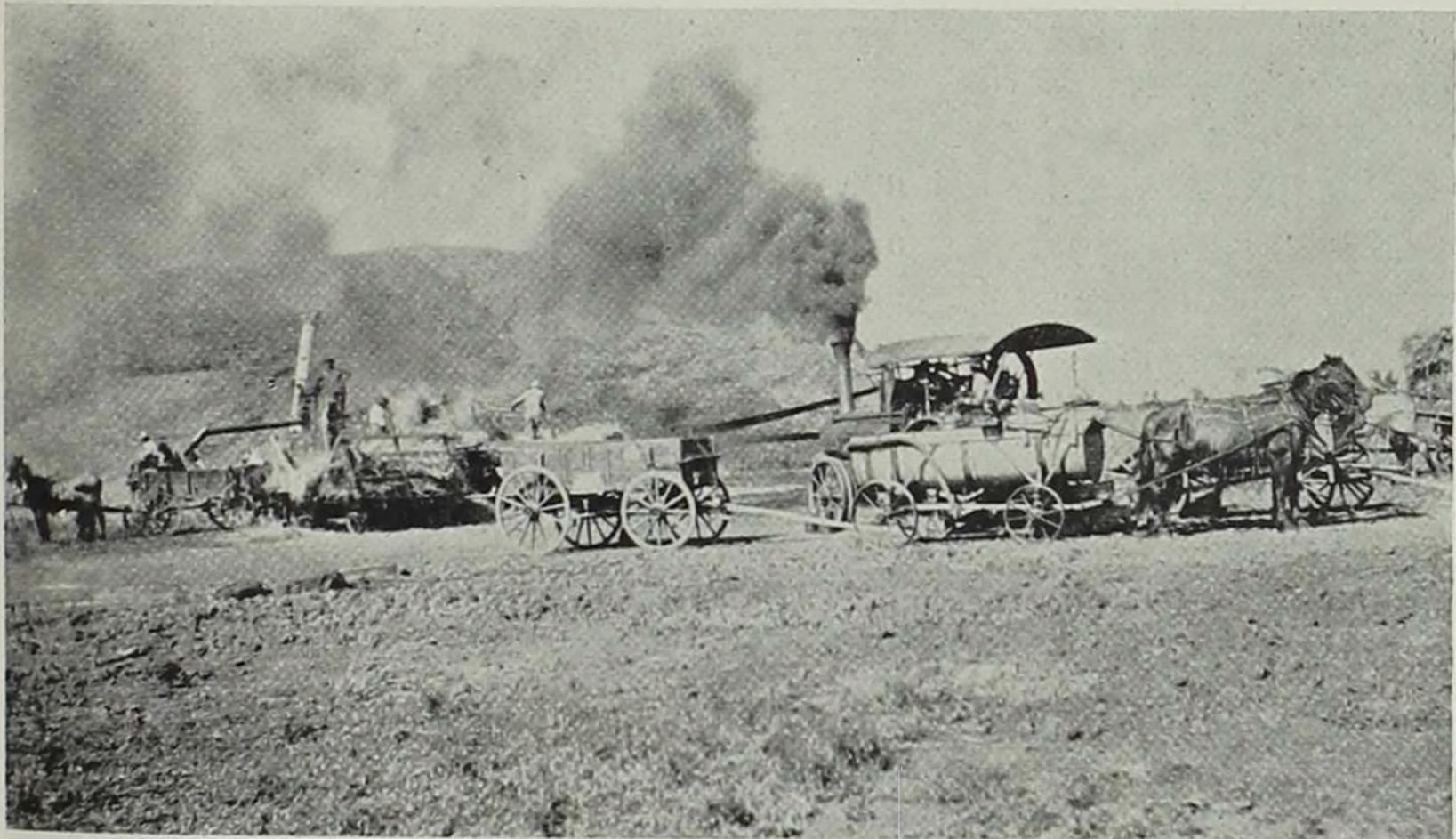
Photo courtesy Mrs. J. E. Hawkins

Queen's float in the Flower Show parade. Since Shenandoah proudly boasted it had "the largest nurseries in the world," the emphasis on flowers was natural.



Photo courtesy Shenandoah Sentinel

Flower Show display at the Shenandoah Armory. Competition for the "best of show" was keen in Shenandoah at all times.



State Historical Society Photo Collection

Threshing on the E. L. Williams farm. Although the emphasis has been on flowers and seeds, other forms of agriculture have been followed in Page County.



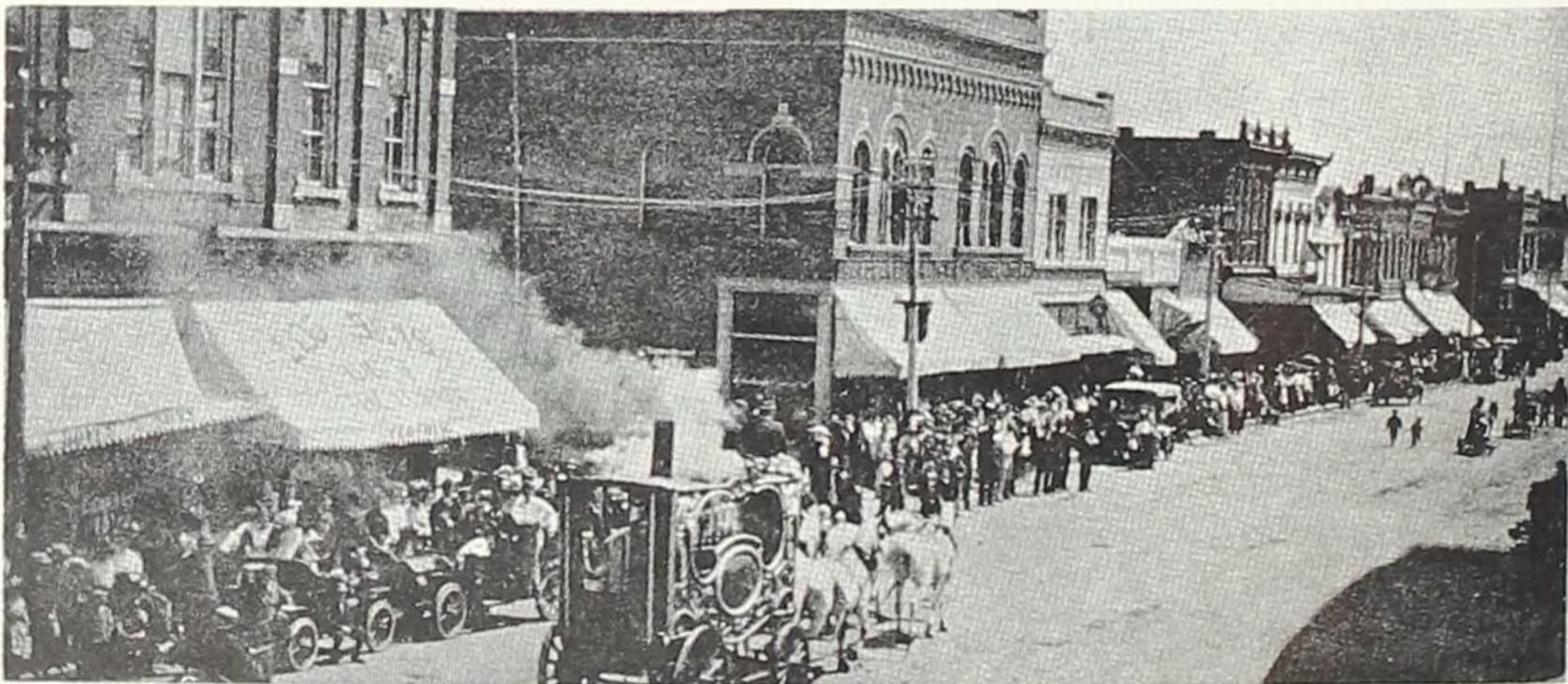
Photo courtesy Shenandoah Sentinel

The Mount Arbor Nurseries. In 1908 Mount Arbor Nurseries advertised 600 acres of "the hardiest and most desirable Fruit and Ornamental Trees, Small Fruits, Shrubs, Roses, Forest Tree Seedlings, etc." The advertisement further declared Mount Arbor to be the "best equipped and most complete Nursery Establishment in the Central West."



Photo courtesy Shenandoah Sentinel

Hog sale day in the 1930's at Shenandoah was advertised over radio. Farmers streamed in from all directions bringing their porkers. The Radio Hog Yards was opened in 1931 and named for Shenandoah's two stations—KMA and KFNF.

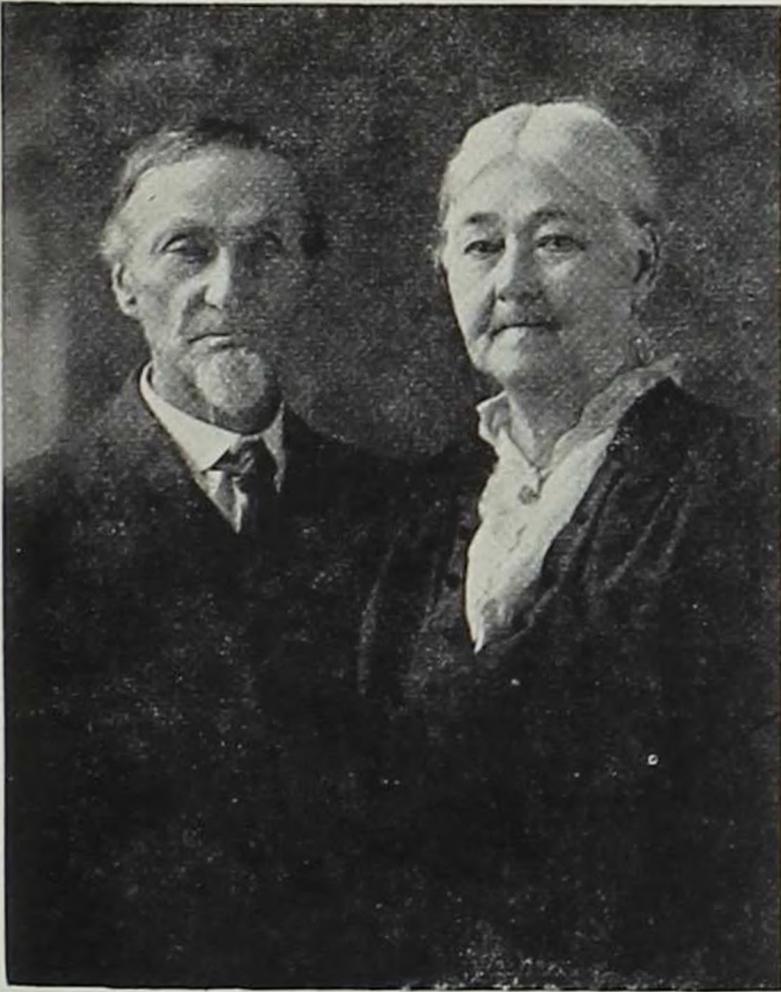


Fourth of July parade drew a big crowd. Shenandoah was rarely eclipsed in properly and enthusiastically observing the birthday of the Nation.



State Historical Society Photo Collection

A favorite spot for high school class parties was Porter's Lake, a short distance out of town. Recreation of all forms was enjoyed—picnicking, boating, and roller skating.



Henry and Catherine L. Hand are representative of those people who put their community above themselves. The Hand Hospital stands as a monument to their memory.

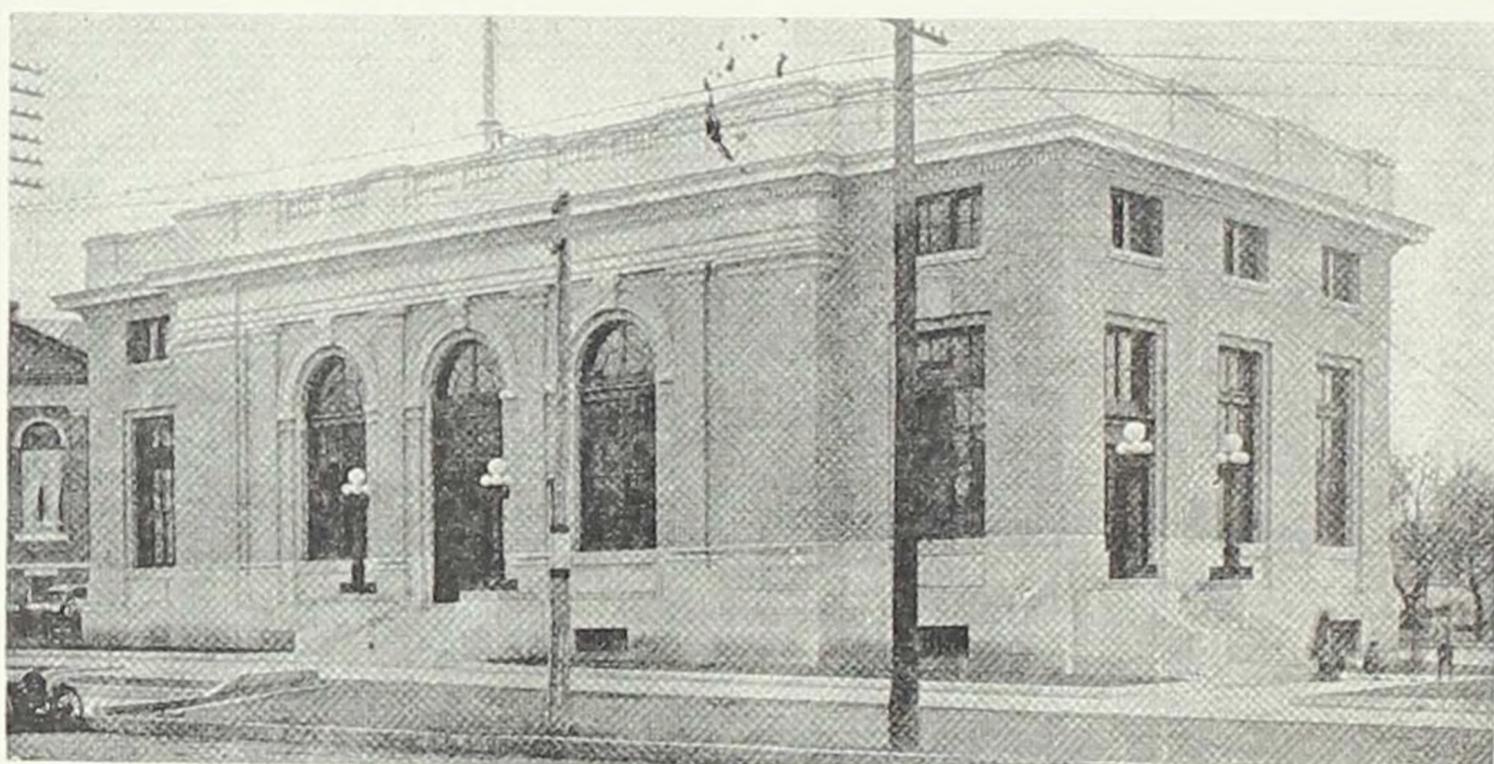


Mr. and Mrs. Warren Fishbaugh represented a well-established family and looked every bit of it in their Sunday best. The family had extensive banking interests.



Photos courtesy Robert S. Ross

Seated in her rocking chair with the familiar mending basket in her lap, Mrs. Louis Fischer chats with one of her pet canaries, perched on her out-stretched hand. The tablecloth is one of her hand painted creations. The Fischer farm, three miles east of town, is still in the family.



State Historical Society Photo Collection

The United States Post Office, Shenandoah, as it appeared in 1912. The first mail was distributed out of O. S. Rider's store during the winter of 1870-1871. Charles Marvin served as postmaster from 1897 to 1906. The salary he received did much to strengthen his beloved *Sentinel*. This building now serves as the City Hall. The post office moved into a new building in 1964.

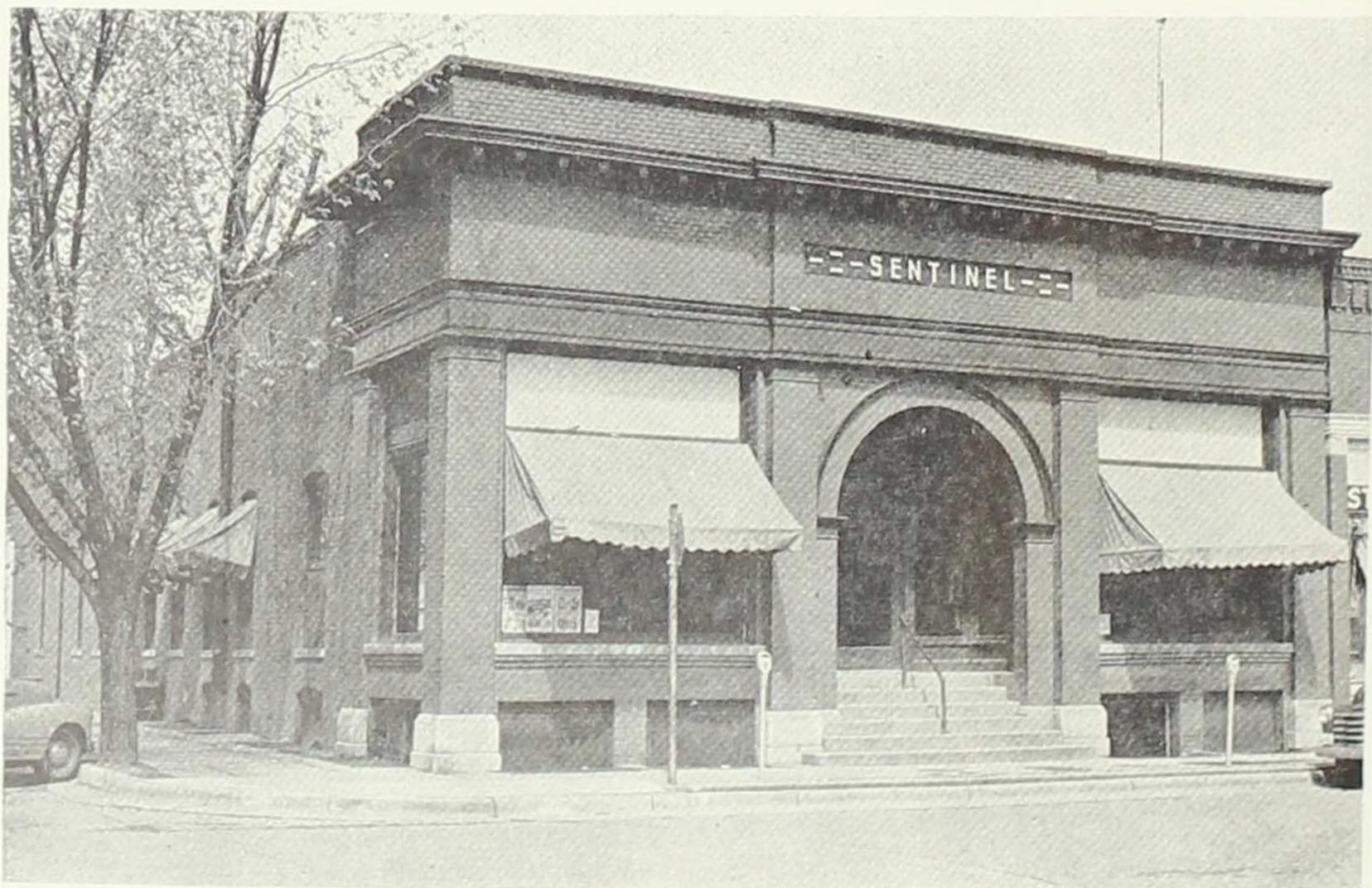


Photo courtesy Merze M. Seeburger

The *Sentinel* building, constructed in 1906, looks the same in 1967. The *Sentinel's* senior editor, R. K. Tindall, came to the paper from the University of Missouri School of Journalism as a young reporter under Charley Marvin in 1914.

heard of the petition. When the stranger said he represented the postmaster general and had come to lay out an experimental route, Marvin, in his excitement, did not wait for his hat. He raced to the livery stable, rented a rig, and they drove out to the farmer's home. With his help, a route was mapped out. Then they drove over the route and found it acceptable.

"Well," said the visitor, "I have two more days to spend here. Let's lay out another route." They did.

Many of the farmers did not believe that rural free delivery would materialize. But the routes came. Delivery started in March 1900. It was a great day for the farmers, and Postmaster-Editor Marvin went around with his head in the clouds for days. City mail delivery did not begin until December of the following year.

As the town grew, the paper expanded. So did Marvin's duties. He needed more help. U. G. Reininger took over the business end and saw that the *Sentinel* kept within its budget.