

THE WASHINGTON

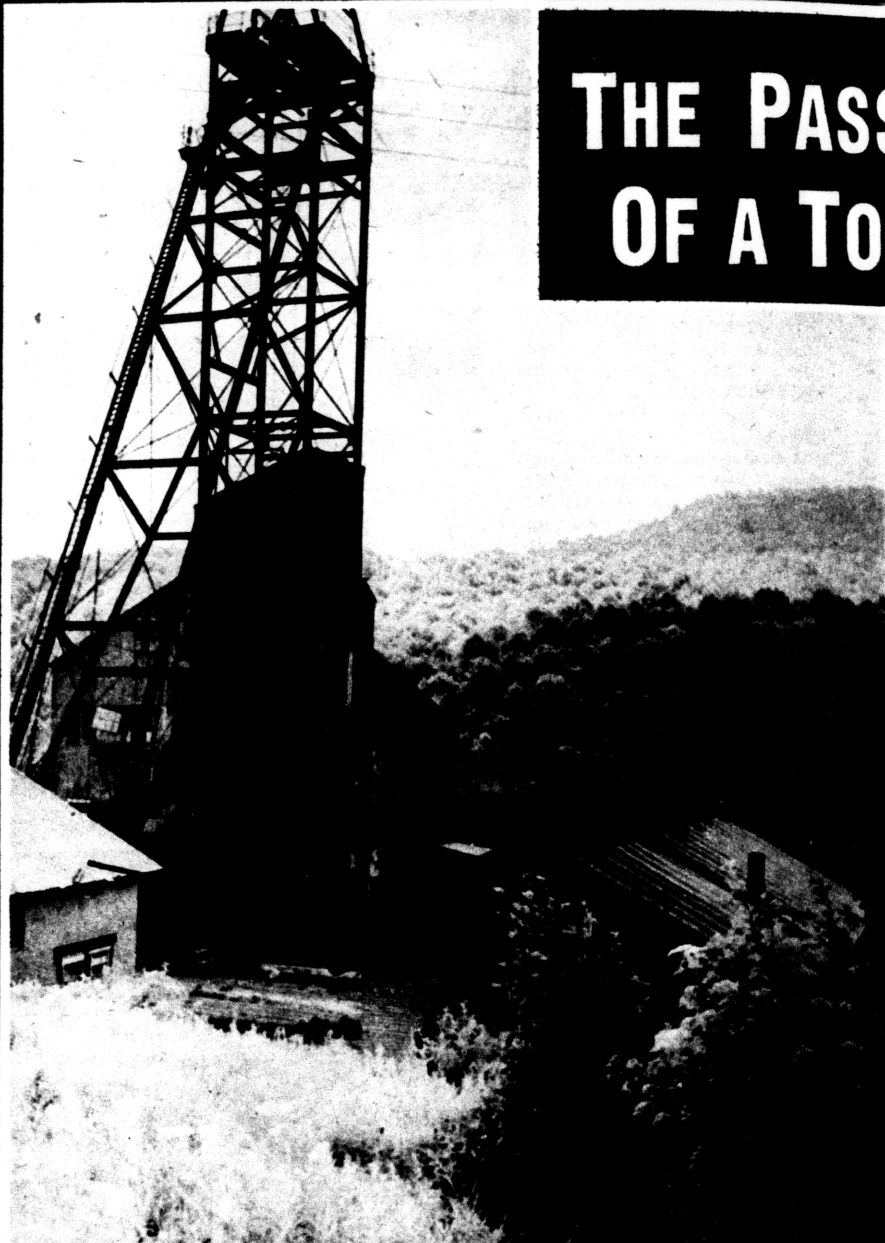
Star

PICTORIAL

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THE PASSING OF A TOWN



Gaunt and deserted, the trolley of the Davis Coal & Coke Co. mine at Kempton, Md., looms against the summer sky. The mine was the town's main support.



This was a house. As residents left, houses were dismantled and moved away. The brick building in the background housed the town's store and post office.

By James Birchfield

KEMPTON, MD.

THIS little town, nestling high in Western Maryland's mountains not far from the Fairfax Stone, which marks the headwaters of the Potomac River, is disappearing from the earth.

Kempton will not become a ghost town, for when the last of the 119 families that once lived here have moved away, the houses, the Post Office and the store will be torn down, leaving nothing but an occasional rubble heap. And in a few years all the scars of man's occupancy will be healed by the encroaching forests.

Kempton was a mining town. A coal mine, operated by the Davis Coal & Coke Co. of Bal-

timore, employed 285 men before it closed a few months ago. Although it is estimated that 40 years' supply of coal remains, the company found the mining operation too costly to continue. The mine is more than 400 feet deep.

When it was closed, the houses occupied by the miners and their families were sold to a Pittsburgh real estate firm. As fast as miners move away, the buildings are torn down and hauled away. The families that remain—there are 22 as of this writing—pay \$16 a month rent to the Pittsburgh firm.

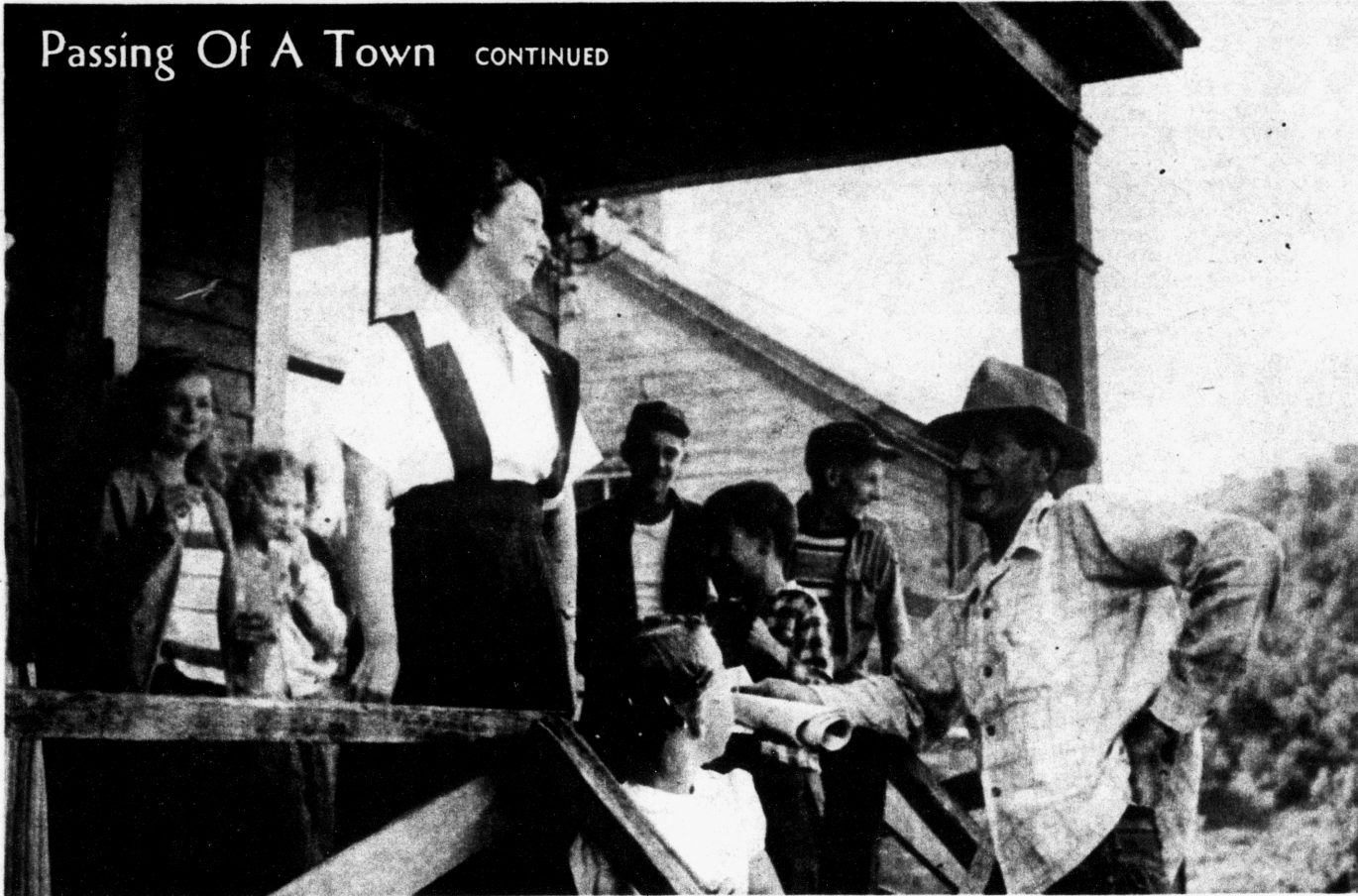
Those who once lived in (Continued on Next Page.)



Mrs. Ella King, who has lived in Kempton for 41 years, chats with her brother Henry Guy, and her granddaughter Bertha King, 8. Mrs. King pays \$16 a month rent to a real estate firm. She doesn't know where she will go now.



The school bell no longer rings for Pauline Skotniski, 15. Like many of the 22 families left in the town, her parents have not yet decided where to locate, if they move away.



Morning mail call at the Post Office. George Sowers, calling for his mail, stops for a word with Mrs. Mabel Bowers, the postmistress. Mrs. Bowers plans to join her husband in Washington soon.



Bernard Broll, secretary, and William P. Bennett, president of the UMW Local 4113, watch water bubble from the abandoned mine. This acid water pollutes trout streams.

Kempton have scattered in many directions. Some have found homes and work in neighboring communities; others have been forced farther away. A few are standing by to see what developments may bring.

There is William P. Bennett, 44, president of Local 4113, United Mine Workers. He and his wife own a mountain farm near Kempton, which makes them independent of the mine.

"I lived here before there was a Kempton," said Mrs. Bennett, "and I guess I can stay here without the town. I feel sorry for those who have no place to go."

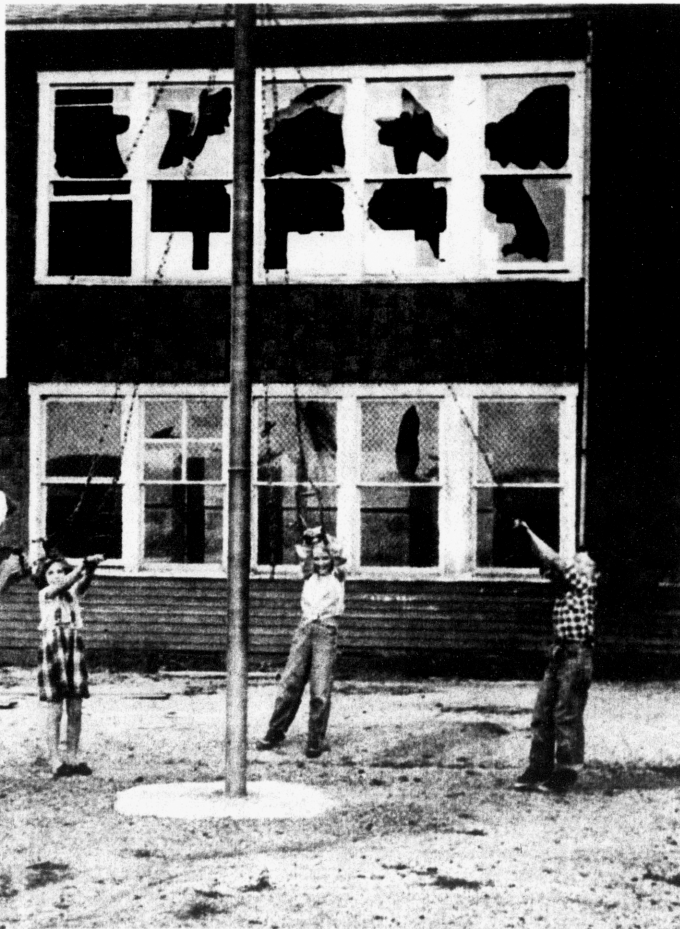
Bernard Broll, union secretary, is standing by. "It's not easy for a man approaching 50

to get a job these days," he explained.

Mrs. Mabel Bowers is the local postmistress. She said the Post Office will be discontinued and the families in the neighborhood will get their mail via a star route. She will move to Washington, where her husband has recently located.

"Kempton, although it won't be any more, always will be home to me, I suppose," she said.

And then there are Mrs. Ella King, a widow, and her brother, Henry Gay, who haven't been able to find any place to move. They have lived in Kempton for more than 40 years. "For us," she said, "there is not much future."



All play and no school now, but children who remain in the community will be taken by bus to nearby Oakton this winter.

STAR STAFF PHOTOS