



May 14, 2019

Ms. Susan Pierce  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
West Virginia Division of Cultural & History  
1900 Kanawha Blvd, East  
Charleston, WV 25305-0300

**Subject: Mountain Valley Pipeline Project  
DRAFT Cunningham Farmstead Documentation  
WVDCH File #15-67-MULTI  
FERC Docket #CP16-10**

Dear Ms. Pierce:

On behalf of Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC (Mountain Valley), a joint venture between affiliates of EQT Midstream Partners, LP and NextEra Energy, Inc., Con Edison Midstream Gas, LLC, WGL Holdings, Inc., and RGC Midstream LLC, Tetra Tech is enclosing for your review, in accordance with the approved *Mountain Valley Pipeline Project, Historic Property Treatment Plan Implementation: Management Summary, Work Plan, and Schedule, Cunningham Farmstead (Losch Farmstead BX-0351)* (February 2018) (Management Summary), draft parts 1, 2, and 3 of the documentation package.

You may contact me by telephone at (304) 685-6593 or by e-mail at [hannah.dye@tetrattech.com](mailto:hannah.dye@tetrattech.com) if you have questions. Thank you for your attention and we look forward to receiving your comments by July 15, 2019 as outlined in the approved Management Summary.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Hannah L. Dye'.

Hannah L. Dye, MA  
Architectural Historian  
Tetra Tech

Cc: Megan Neylon, EQM (no attachment)  
Evelyn Tidlow, GAI (no attachment)

Attachment: DRAFT Cunningham Farmstead Documentation



# Cunningham Farmstead: Past and Present

---

Prepared for:

Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC (FERC Docket CP16-10) and  
West Virginia Division of Cultural and History – Historic Preservation Unit  
(FR# 15-67-MULTI)

Prepared by:

Hannah L. Dye, MA  
Tetra Tech, Inc.  
May 2019

# Table of Contents

## CONTENTS

1.0	Preface .....	1
2.0	Acknowledgments .....	1
3.0	Introduction .....	2
4.0	Physical History .....	2
5.0	Historic Context .....	5
5.1	Woodland, Grasslands, and Diversified Livestock Economy in the Post-Railroad Era .....	5
5.2	Cooperation in the World War II Era .....	10
5.3	Out-Migration .....	12
6.0	Architectural Analysis .....	13
6.1	Farmhouse .....	13
6.2	Root Cellar .....	16
6.3	Coal/Wood Shed .....	16
6.4	Corncrib .....	16
6.5	Storage Shed .....	17
6.6	Privy .....	17
6.7	Barn .....	17
6.8	Feed House .....	17
7.0	Conclusion .....	19
8.0	References .....	20



## 1.0 PREFACE

This booklet is part of the consultation and mitigation process associated with the Mountain Valley Pipeline Project (Project), undertaken by Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC (Mountain Valley), a joint venture among affiliates of EQT Midstream Partners, LP, NextEra Energy, Inc., Con Edison Gas Midstream, LLC, WGL Holdings, Inc., and RGC Midstream, LLC. The overall project involved the construction of a 303-mile, 42-inch-diameter natural gas pipeline to provide timely, cost-effective access to the growing demand for natural gas for use by local distribution companies, industrial users and power generation in the Mid-Atlantic and southeastern markets, as well as potential markets in the Appalachian region. The pipeline extends from the existing Equitrans, L.P. transmission system and other natural gas facilities in Wetzel County, West Virginia to Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC's Zone 5 compressor station 165 in Pittsylvania County, Virginia. Approximately 196 miles of the 303-mile pipeline was constructed in West Virginia. Historic properties determined to be subjected to adverse effects from the Project (including visual impacts) required mitigation. Following submittal of the Criteria of Effects Report for the project, West Virginia Division of Culture and History - Historic Preservation Unit (WVDCH), issued its opinion that the proposed project adversely affects the Cunningham Farmstead (property), a historic resource determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

The property's extant farmhouse and associated outbuildings convey their original function and purpose and demonstrate the spatial planning of small, early-twentieth-century farms in Braxton County. Therefore, it is eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion A. The property is a significant early-twentieth-century example from the region's repertoire of vernacular architecture. As such, the farmstead is eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion C at the local level for its collection of representative examples of vernacular style domestic and agricultural architecture.

Consultation with WVDCH and the property's owners resulted in a treatment plan to prepare a multimedia intensive-level documentation of the Cunningham Farmstead.<sup>1</sup> Although this booklet with its associated digital photographic and audio material is a product of the historic preservation regulatory environment, Mountain Valley is proud to

<sup>1</sup> Tetra Tech, *Mountain Valley Pipeline Project, Historic Property Treatment Plan, Cunningham (Losch) Farmstead (BX-0351)* (September 2017).

support a publication such as this, which records and preserves the property's historic and cultural significance through the interpretation of its built environment.

John Sutton wrote in his 1919 *History of Braxton County and Central West Virginia*:

---

*Braxton County, the very central county of the state of West Virginia has never recorded a line of her history. Her citizens have not been ignorant of their duty, neither have they willfully neglected it, but they have been too busy in digging from her soil a living for their families, felling forests and bringing to use some of valuable resources, to this write.*<sup>2</sup>

---

This documentation of the Cunningham family's farmstead will optimistically provide a new perspective on Braxton County's agricultural history and add to the county's limited line of historical secondary sources. The Cunningham Farmstead is a significant historic property—it provides us with a physical link to ways of building and farming that once sustained families in Braxton in the early-twentieth-century. Its very presence reminds us of the struggle for existence and shelter that led to the development of rural communities in central West Virginia. It also brings us to a fuller understanding of West Virginia's rich and diverse architectural heritage. Studies of West Virginia architecture often, but not always, direct our attention to the finest and best-preserved examples of high style architecture. But what of indigenous buildings created out of local cultural preferences, evolving building practices, family needs, agricultural possibilities, and economic forces? These buildings open up a world of inquiry into social meaning and everyday uses relevant to a wider section of West Virginia society. They too have a place in West Virginia's collection of great houses, not just for their ability to endure the ravages of time, but also for the example of competence and sufficiency they offer.

<sup>2</sup> John P. Sutton, *History of Braxton County and Central West Virginia* (Sutton, WV: 1919), 11.

## Cunningham Farmstead: Past and Present

## 2.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This documentation is unique in that it lacked historic photographic evidence aside from historic aerial photography. Images from the past provide raw material for constructing stories and without them the effort relied heavily on published and unpublished records and oral



Image 1. Cunningham Farmstead Farmhouse (foreground) and root cellar (background), View Northwest.

“documents” (in the form of oral history) in conjunction with analysis of the built environment. The unpublished records and the oral history provided the historical “snapshots” where none existed. Appreciation is extended to Shirley Nelson, granddaughter of the farmstead's founders Sam and Thursia Cunningham, for her contributions including a written narrative/memoir and oral history. Further, the farmstead's unpublished archival materials allowed for a much more personalized historic context for the property and Ms. Nelson's willingness to share these materials proved invaluable to this effort.

## Cunningham Farmstead: Past and Present 2

### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

This Cunningham Farmstead scene, which was replicated thousands of times up and down the Appalachian chain, evokes the mountain way of life—of its hardscrabble setting and its peripheral beauty (*Image 2*). To this day, the farmstead is accessed only by a road carved out of a stream bed and has never had electricity or indoor plumbing. The farm's inhabitants in the years between 1910 and 1955 represent the approximately 105,000 farmers who eked a subsistence out of the Appalachian Mountains in West Virginia in the early to mid-twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> The now vacant property represents decades of supplemented subsistence in the money-poor but barter-and-borrow-rich environment of rural West Virginia.<sup>4</sup>

The Cunningham Farmstead is sited in a hollow at the eastern terminus of what today is called County Road (CR) 4/4 (Little Knawl Creek Road), approximately one-half-mile west of the road's intersection with CR 19/12 Millstone Run Road in the vicinity of Napier in Braxton County, West Virginia. However, for most of the early twentieth century the farmstead's mailing address was Road 1 (R.F.D #1) Walkersville, Lewis County. The property is located approximately six miles southwest of Walkersville, Lewis County, and approximately three miles northeast of Napier and approximately seven miles southeast of Burnsville—both in Braxton County.

Bordered by forested lands of the Burnsville Lake Wildlife Management Area, the vacant and remote property stands as one of the few remaining visual reminders of the small subsistent farms that dotted the landscape a century ago, albeit the relocated log cabins at the Bulltown Historic Area approximately one-and-a-half miles to the southwest.<sup>5</sup> The Cunningham Farmstead stands in contrast to these buildings, as this collection of domestic and agricultural structures remains isolated and preserved in its original location and setting.

<sup>3</sup> The number of farms in West Virginia peaked at 105,000 in 1935 and dropped steadily thereafter. Charles Sperow. "Agriculture." e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia. 04 September 2012. Web. 07 March 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Salstrom, "Subsistence-Barter-and-Borrow Systems: An Approach to West Virginia's Economic History" in *West Virginia History* (Volume 51:1992), 45-54.

<sup>5</sup> This property should not be confused with the Cunningham House and Outbuildings located at Bulltown.

### 4.0 PHYSICAL HISTORY

The approximately 314-acre Cunningham Farmstead property today comprises five tracts of land that were acquired by Sam and Thursia Cunningham in 1910 (160 acres +/- on which the farmstead is located),



*Image 2. Cunningham Farmstead Overview, View Northeast.*

1917 (60 acres +/-), 1918 (73.5 acres and 1.5 acres), and 1952 (19 and ¾ acres).

Today, the farmstead comprises buildings and structures with construction dates ranging from circa 1910 to circa 1960. As with many vernacular buildings, the exact dates of their construction are not known in every case, though approximate dates can be provided based on physical observations and oral history. The residence at the farmstead appears to be the earliest on the property dating to circa 1910. The root cellar and barn on the farmstead may be contemporary with the house, or nearly so. The coal/wood shed, feed house, and corncrib apparently were constructed after the farmhouse, root cellar and barn, in the first

half of the twentieth century. The storage shed was presumably constructed mid-century and the more recent of the structures at the farmstead is a privy constructed circa 1995. Architectural analysis of these buildings and structures are provided in Section 6.

The historic buildings and structures at the Cunningham Farmstead are vernacular in character and were likely designed by the owners of the property at the time of their construction, Sam and Thursia Cunningham. It is reasonable to believe that the original design of the house simply represents a collaborative effort on the part of its then owners and the contractor(s) hired to construct it. Table 4-1 on page 4 provides a list of the owners of the 160-acre parcel on which the Cunningham Farmstead is located.

The names of the builders, contractors, and suppliers involved in the construction of the various buildings and structures present at the farmstead are not known. However, members of the Cunningham family likely participated in the construction of many of the buildings—if only as laborers—as would have been typical on most farms of the period. No original plans exist for any of the buildings present at the farmstead.

The extant resources currently contained within the Cunningham Farmstead reflect only a portion of those that comprised the farmstead in the early twentieth century (**Appendix A – Site Plan**). In addition to the buildings that currently comprise the property, typical of early-twentieth-century farmsteads in the region the farmstead also included a sheep barn, poultry (chicken and turkey) houses, combined smoke/well house, hog house, garage (which may have originally have been a carriage house), and silo.<sup>6</sup>

The Cunningham Farmstead's sheep barn was sited one-quarter-mile northeast of the farmhouse on a ridgetop surrounded by pasture. While there are no historic photographs of the former barn, it likely possessed characteristics common of this type of barn. Sheep barns were long and relatively narrow. They were usually two stories, with a gabled roof. On the ground floor, gable end doors were centrally positioned, usually only on one gable end. A row of small, square windows lined each of the eaves sides. Above them, sometimes rows of louvered ventilators would

<sup>6</sup> Shirley Nelson, personal communication, November 11, 2018.

admit air to the loose hay stored in the barn. On the upper level, in one gable end, a hay door and sometimes a hood or track extension showed where hay was loaded into the loft. Most sheep barns possessed these basic elements, though sometimes they were differently arranged.

As the local history notes, poultry became slightly more important as coal-town and oil-rig markets developed. A typical farm in the region might have seven or eight dozen birds, accommodated in small poultry houses.<sup>7</sup> As was the case for the Cunningham Farmstead, these houses were normally sited close to the main house, because poultry raising work at this scale of operation was typically done by women and children.<sup>8</sup>

Often, resourceful farm people combined functions in a single outbuilding. The Cunningham Farmstead possessed a frame combination smokehouse and well house building sited approximately five feet west of the root cellar.<sup>9</sup> A smokehouse was a small windowless structure, often with a square or rectangular footprint, with facilities inside for smoking meat. A gabled roof was most common, but some had pyramidal roofs. There was a door in the gable side, but no chimney and no windows, as the purpose of a smokehouse was to contain smoke that would permeate meats hanging within, thus preserving them. A smokehouse might have a small door for ash removal at the base of the structure.<sup>10</sup>

These facilities usually consist of a hearth, and hooks or laths from which the smoking meats could be suspended. Hams and bacon were smoked here in the late fall. Smokehouses were a mixed-gender, community workspace, as most often neighborhood men and women cooperated at butchering time.

A wellhouse was a common rectangular or squarish outbuilding in the days before electricity. The well itself, with a windlass and bucket for drawing water, generally was near the wellhouse door often under a cantilevered roof. Inside were water troughs in which the milk jars were stored and into which cool water was poured a couple of times a day to keep the milk cool. For rural people who had neither electricity nor ice, the wellhouse was the refrigerator as well as the source of water. It was always built in the coolest and most shady spot available.

<sup>7</sup> John P. Sutton, *History of Braxton County and Central West Virginia*, 211.

<sup>8</sup> Shirley Nelson indicated that the chicken and turkey houses were located in the farmhouse's orbit.

<sup>9</sup> Shirley Nelson, personal communication, November 11, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> Allen G. Noble and Richard K. Cleek, *The Old Barn Book: A Field Guide to North American Barns & Other Farm Structures* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 146-147.

The Cunningham Farmstead's hog house was sited approximately 200 feet north of, and across the creek from the smokehouse and wellhouse.<sup>11</sup> While there are no historic photographs of the former building it likely possessed characteristics common of this structure type. A hog house was a separate building for housing hogs (pigs, swine). Generally, this was a low building, sometimes gabled, sometimes with a shed roof. Diagnostic characteristics include individual pens for each animal, revealed on the outside by square openings in the eaves side, which in turn lead to an enclosed outdoor pen for each animal, partitioned off individually. Above this range of doors openings or vents gave air and light. It usually faced south.

The early-twentieth century saw a transition from horse-drawn transport to the automobile. Nevertheless, carriage houses would have predominated in Braxton County up to at least circa 1920. So, it is likely that the farmstead's "garage" originated as a carriage house. These buildings were mainly intended to house equipment for human transportation, and the horses that drew them. As such, they commanded a privileged place in the farmstead site plan, usually in proximity to the house. The Cunningham Farmstead's garage was sited east of the farmhouse on the opposite side of the driveway. Also, carriage houses not uncommonly had some ornamental architectural trim that would not always appear on a barn. Such trim might have been similar to the bracket on the farmhouse's back porch (See Section 6 – *Image 31*).

The Cunningham Farmstead possessed a silo that was located adjacent to the barn's east elevation, as evidenced by the extant circular concrete foundation. The silo was not used to any extent in West Virginia until circa 1910. John Loyd, a dairy farmer near Sutton, was the first to build one in Braxton County. Braxton County began to build silos in earnest in 1915. Braxton Countians embraced the silo because they believed that "the silo is destined to revolutionize the stock business in West Virginia, and greatly increase the number of the cattle raised and fattened for the markets."<sup>12</sup>

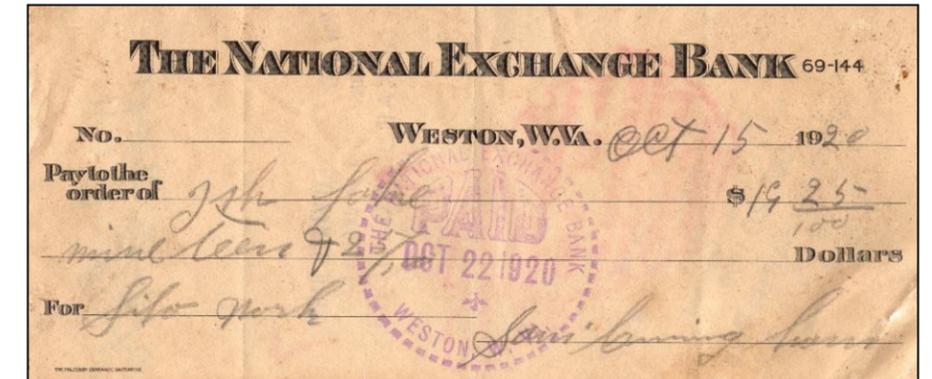
While there are no historical photographs of the Cunningham Farmstead's silo, it is likely that it was a hoop and stave silo—the most common type used in Braxton County in the early twentieth century.

<sup>11</sup> Shirley Nelson, personal communication, November 11, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> John P. Sutton, 296.

## Cunningham Farmstead: Past and Present

The most popular size was 12 feet in diameter by 30 feet in height.<sup>13</sup> The memo on a cancelled check written by Sam Cunningham dated October 15, 1920, specifies "silo work" (*Image 3*). It is unclear whether this was for the construction of the silo at that time or for repair work. However, either way the Cunningham Farmstead was among those farms



*Image 3. Cancelled check endorsed by Sam Cunningham for "silo work," October 15, 1920.*

that embraced this new approach to storing silage in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Although machinery was not as predominant as in other regions, a majority of farms in Braxton County in the early twentieth century would have included a machine shed that was small in scale and basic in function. It is likely that the Cunningham Farmstead also included one of these structures.

In the early twentieth century, the typical Braxton County farm had no electricity and so lacked radios (unless battery-operated), refrigerators, electric stoves, and other amenities that town and city dwellers enjoyed. In fact, the Cunningham family still relied on a battery-operated radio in the 1940s. A letter from Sears, Roebuck, and Co. to Thursia Cunningham referenced Cunningham's order for a radio battery—an order that could not be filled as the majority of the nation's battery production was required for government needs for the war effort (*Image 4*). On the letter's reverse, Cunningham had written a note to herself that she had purchased the Silvertone Radio July 29, 1940.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

## Cunningham Farmstead: Past and Present 4

The Cunningham Farmstead was never electrified and didn't have access to natural gas until the 1960s. Most farm families had fruit cellars for storage of dried or canned fruits and vegetables, ice houses, and smokehouses for salting and curing meats. As previously noted, the Cunningham Farmstead included a root cellar and smokehouse; however, there is no evidence of an ice house. The typical farm during this period used wood burning stoves for cooking and heating. The Cunningham

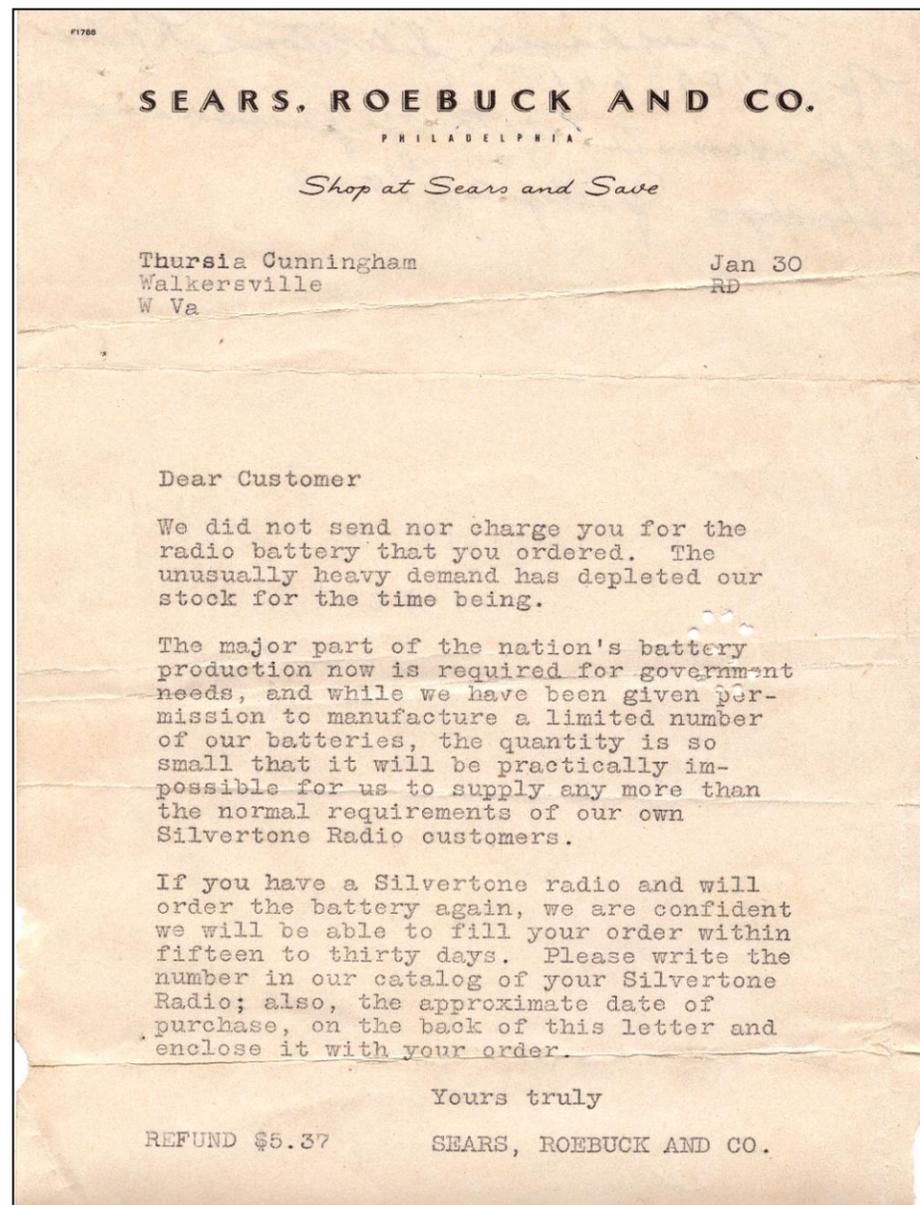


Image 4. Letter from Sears, Roebuck, and Co. to Thursia Cunningham regarding radio battery order, circa 1942.

Farmstead relied on wood burning fireplaces until natural gas stoves were installed in the fireplaces in the 1960s. Few farmsteads during this period had piped-in water, and most relied on outdoor privies. The Cunningham Farmstead never received indoor plumbing. The family relied on water that was pumped from a well for drinking, water collected from the creeks or pumped from the well for bathing, and privies.<sup>14</sup>

### 4.1 Summary of Property Conveyances for Parcel Containing the Cunningham Farmstead

Date	Grantee	Grantor	Description	Reference
1988	Shirley Nelson (1/2 interest) and Maxine Losch (1/2 interest)	French Cunningham	160 acres +/-	Will
1955	French Cunningham	Thursia Cunningham	160 acres +/-	Will
1939	Thursia Cunningham	Sam Cunningham	160 acres +/-	Will
5-19-1910	Sam Cunningham	Charles A. and Lucy Dennison	160 acres +/-	Deed Book 81/p.413
3-10-1893	Charles A. Dennison	Thomas E. Dennison and Sarah Clark (Dennison), wife	160 acres +/- "part of the land left by will of Robert B. Clark, said Sarah A. Clark Dennison being his widow..."	Deed Book 30/p.212-214
3-17-1860	Robert B. Clark	William M. Berry (et ux)	One tract "Nauls" Creek "containing [illegible] acres more or less being part of a tract of land conveyed by M. Byrne to Wm. M. Berry	Deed Book 8/p.168
5-11-1857	William M. Berry	Marcellus Byrne (heir of John B. Byrne)	227 acres L. "Nauls" Creek (part of divided estate of John B. Byrne)	Deed Book 7/p.26
9-28-1837	John B. Byrne	William P. Haymond (et ux)	"part of 25,000 acres conveyed to Frederick Fally (Folly?) and Samuel [illegible] from governor of Virginia...Harrison County"	Deed Book 1/p.242

<sup>14</sup> Shirley Nelson, November 11, 2018.

A review of historic aerial photography indicates that the landscape has undergone significant changes. As seen in **Image 5**, due to new-growth trees and vegetation that currently predominates the landscape, the farm no longer maintains its historic agricultural landscape features—ridge top pasture land where the sheep barn once stood, home garden west of the farmhouse, corn field approximately 300 east of the farmhouse, tractor path leading to the sheep barn—some of which are evident in historic aerial photography (**Image 6**).



Image 5. Cunningham Farmstead, aerial photograph, 2019. ©Digital Globe.



Image 6. Cunningham Farmstead, 1960 aerial photograph USGS.

## 5.0 HISTORIC CONTEXT

### 5.1 Woodland, Grasslands, and Diversified Livestock Economy in the Post-Railroad Era

Completed in 1858, the approximately 100-mile Weston & Gauley Bridge Turnpike—running from the Northwest Turnpike near Clarksburg to the James River & Kanawha Turnpike below Summersville—served as an early transportation route for developing commerce in Braxton and surrounding counties. By the 1840s, the population in Lewis, Braxton, and Nicholas counties had increased enough to warrant the need and make possible the construction of a north-south road. It was necessary to construct a road for farmers to transport their products to the important grist and sawmills located in Sutton, county seat for Braxton. Access to the salt industry in the Bulltown area added to the traffic. The Weston & Gauley Bridge Turnpike opened up the wild and largely unsettled region of western Virginia. Built in response to local institutions, the road became a part of a regional road system providing a connection for commercial and industrial development.

John Sutton wrote in his *History of Braxton County and Central West Virginia*:

---

*Before the railroads were built, we have seen as many as a thousand head of sheep going over the Weston and Gauley Bridge turnpike in one day. It was not uncommon in the fall or spring to see two hundred head of cattle in one drove passing over the same route. These cattle were bought up as feeders or to be grazed and put in good condition for the market... Before the West Virginia & Pittsburgh division of the B&O rail-road was built from Clarksburg to Richwood, Bridgeport was the principal shipping point for a great portion of the stock from several counties south of that point.*<sup>15</sup>

---

After the Civil War, the population increased, money became more plentiful and in the late nineteenth century, railroads began to pierce the interior of the state, supplementing the turnpike. The West Virginia & Pittsburgh Railroad (WV&P) was completed from Weston to Flatwoods in 1890 and 1891, to Camden-on-Gauley in 1891 and 1892, and to Richwood in 1899. The line was sold to the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) in September of 1899 and was thereafter referred to as the Richwood

<sup>15</sup> John P. Sutton, 296.

Branch of the B&O. The Monogah Railroad was built in 1889 and the Short Line Railroad was built in 1901. The Coal and Coke Railroad from Charleston to Elkins was completed in 1904. The Elk & Kanawha narrow gauge railroad was built from Gassaway to Rosedale in 1912 and shortly thereafter was extended to Shock.

The Cunningham Farmstead lies in a narrow nine-square-mile area—where Braxton, Lewis, Upshur, and Webster counties all adjoin one another—and where almost half of the land has slopes of 40 percent or more. A dozen streams or “runs” cut the area into a series of steep valleys and narrow ridges, with only occasional narrow strips of level bottomland providing land suitable for crops. The families here were mostly part-time farmers who had combined farming with lumbering, mining, and road work. Wages from these various occupations had been necessary supplements to the meager cash returns of their farms.<sup>16</sup>

Before the introduction of railroads in West Virginia’s interior, the people never thought of buying their flour and meat, but each farmer tried to produce enough for his own consumption with some to spare. However, public works and the lumber industry called men from the farms and “reduced the interior counties to want.”<sup>17</sup> Many, even farmers, relied upon the importation of flour and meat, and the amount of hay, straw, and chop consumed was far in excess of the county’s production. In the case of the Cunningham Farmstead, purchases were made from local suppliers, such as Burnsville Milling Company (Burnsville), Gregg Grocery Company (Weston), and H.C. Alexander Brokerage Co. (Clarksburg), but those purchases were supplemented by others from remote suppliers such as the Acme-Evans Company in Indianapolis (**Images 7 through 10**). This reliance on importation was exacerbated by World War I. In 1917, chop feed could not be bought wholesale at Sutton, Burnsville, Weston or Clarksburg.<sup>18</sup>

However, the transport revolutions that increased local farmers’ dependency on imported agricultural products also offered new markets for central West Virginia products and opened up the region’s agriculture to competition that eventually would transform farming in the state. Also, the expansion and continued operation of the railroads were supported, literally, by the region’s lumber in the form of crossties. During this period in the history of central West Virginia agriculture, a

<sup>16</sup> Jerry B. Thomas, *An Appalachian New Deal: West Virginia in the Great Depression* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 184.

<sup>17</sup> John P. Sutton, 211.

<sup>18</sup> John P. Sutton, 364.

## Cunningham Farmstead: Past and Present

regionally distinctive farming system first emerged and evolved.

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, central West Virginia was developing a highly diversified farming system that emphasized products that made use of woodland and grassland resources. Woodlands were exploited for lumber. Grassland was worked for pasture and hay meadow; cattle, sheep, and horses grazed on these lands and consumed the hay. The Cunningham Farmstead exemplified this developing system as Sam Cunningham was a dealer of lumber and livestock (**Images 11 and 12**).

In 1914, the Railway Education Bureau stated that there were approximately 375,000 miles of railway track in the United States, with the average number of ties per mile of track between 2,800 and 2,900. At that time, an estimated one billion ties were in use and with the average life of the tie in service being less than eight years, 125 million ties were required annually for renewal.<sup>19</sup> Inspection reports, orders, and shipping notices from the B&O and other railroad suppliers for crossties demonstrate that this demand served Sam Cunningham favorably as a lumber dealer (**Image 13**).

Cropland yielded a diverse range, but small total volume, of grains; cropland was less important than in other parts of the state, owing mainly to the steep topography. Nonetheless, it formed a critical component of the overall diversified farming system. There was comparatively little need for expensive farm implements, partly because of the topography, but also because so much land was in pasture and crops were relatively less important than in other areas of the state. Production relied heavily on family labor, and farming was conducted mainly by owner-operators. This farming system relied heavily on grassland, as opposed to cropland; both used primarily family labor; neither was heavily mechanized; and farm values were low, as were tenancy rates. Federal census manuscripts from 1920 indicate that the Cunningham family had only one resident hired man with the profession of farm laborer, Perry C. Townsend, and subsequent census records specify none.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Barbara Park, “Crossties, Creosote, and Wood Preserving: The Foundation of Railways, the Life-blood of My Family,” *The Sentinel: A Quarterly Magazine Published by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Historical Society* (Volume 38, Number 4: Fourth Quarter 2016), 3.

<sup>20</sup> A tenant farmer is one who resides on land owned by a landlord. Tenant farming is an

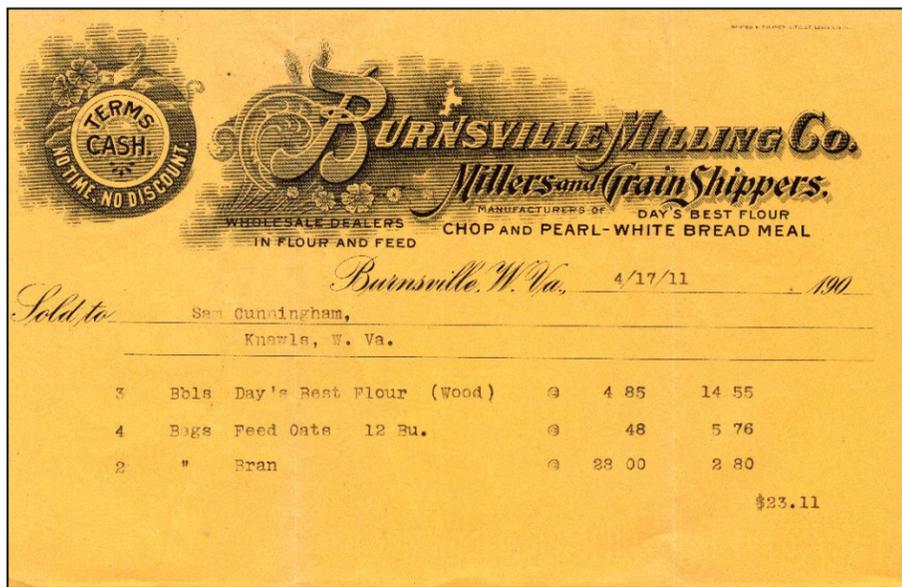


Image 7. Burnsville Milling Company receipt, April 17, 1911.

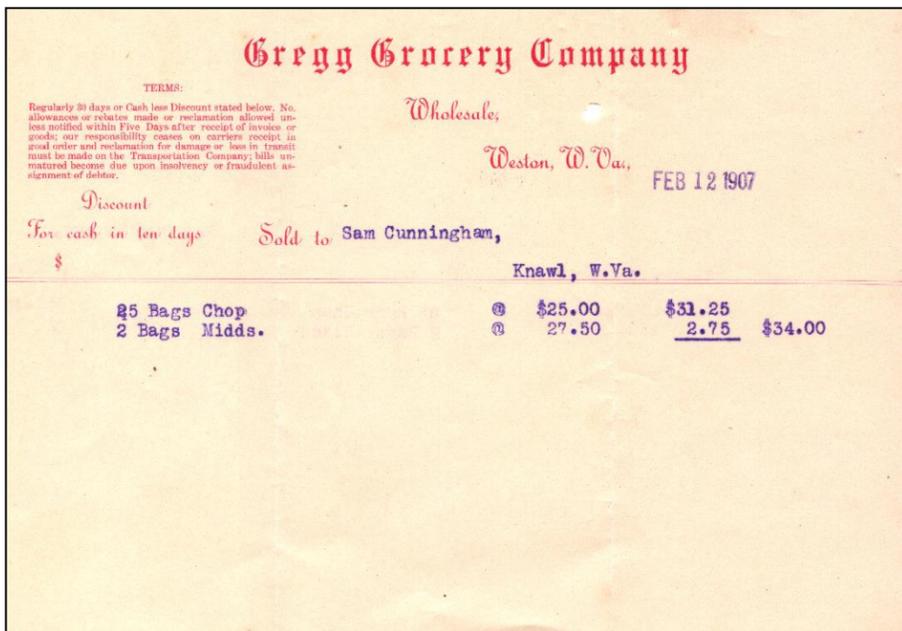


Image 8. Gregg Grocery Company receipt, February 12, 1907.

agricultural production system in which landowners contribute their land and often a measure of operating capital and management, while tenant farmers contribute their labor along with at times varying amounts of capital and management. A hired hand is an agricultural employee even though he or she may live on the premises and exercise a considerable amount of control over the agricultural work, such as a foreman.

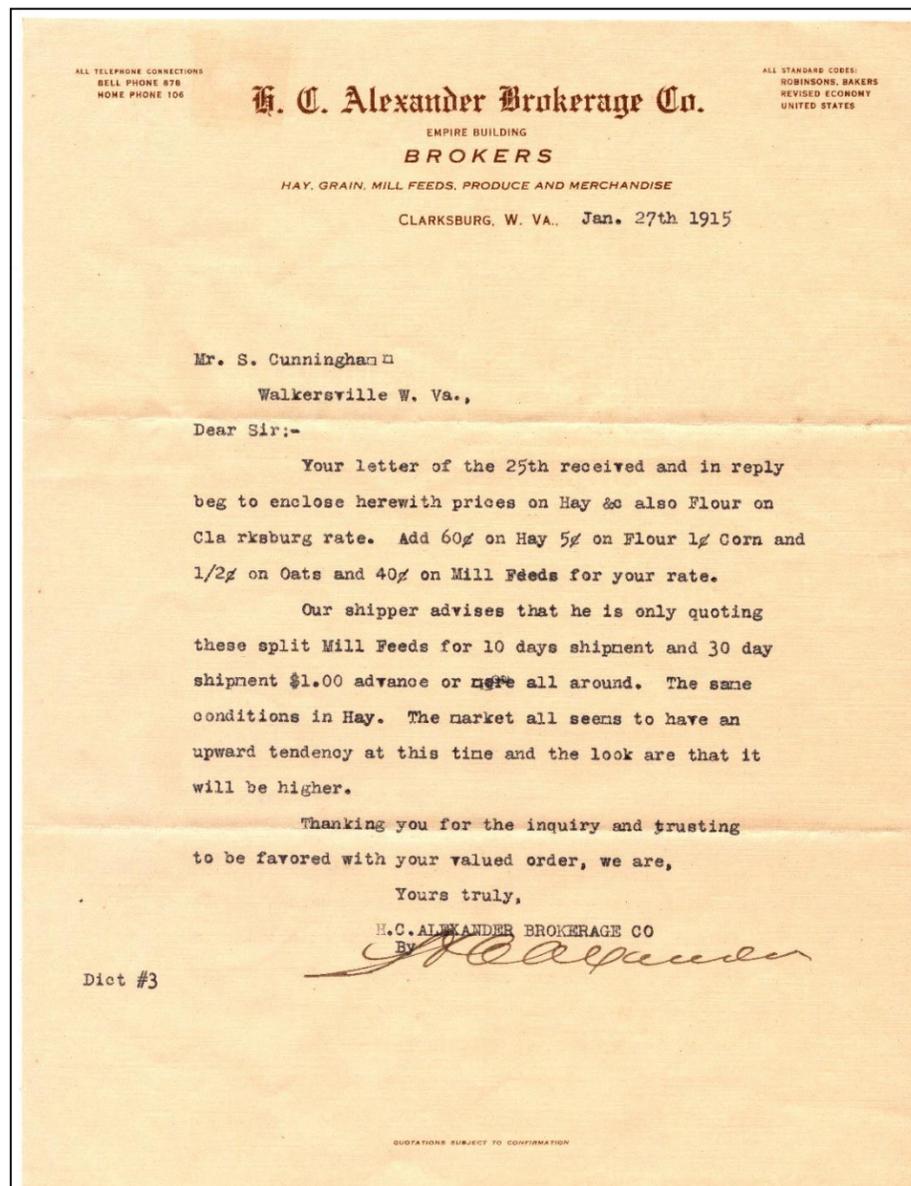


Image 9. Letter from H.C. Alexander Brokerage Co., to Sam Cunningham regarding prices of hay, flour, corn, oats, and mill feeds, January 27, 1915.

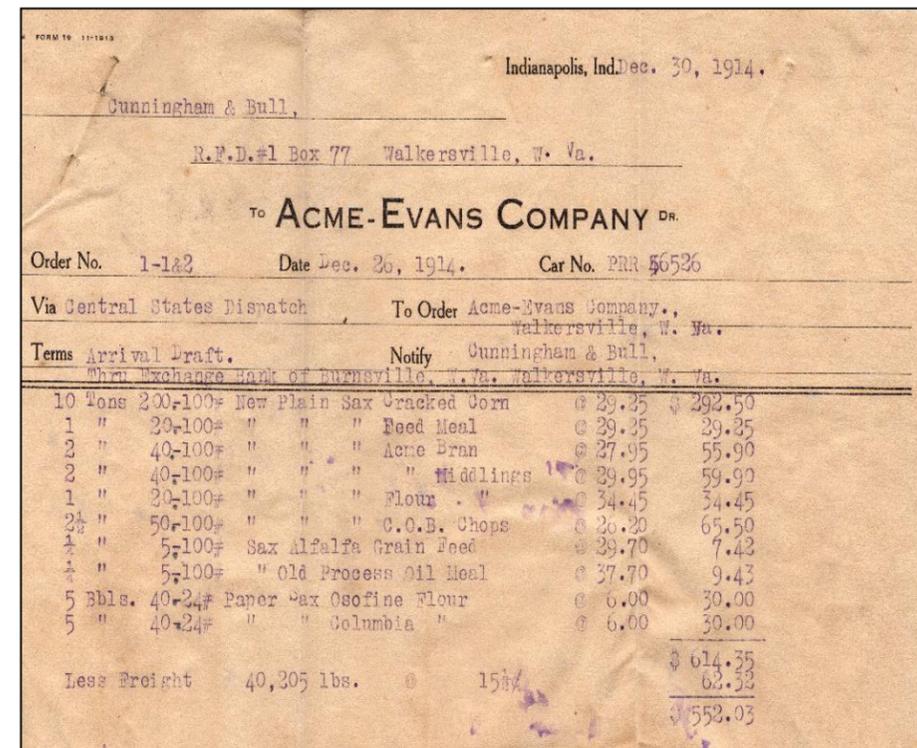


Image 10. Acme-Evans Company receipt, December 30, 1914.

Grazing and droving—especially sheep and cattle—formed a more significant component of the farm economy. Sutton noted in his *History of Braxton County and Central West Virginia*:

*Central West Virginia is a grazing section. Some of the finest horses, cattle and sheep have been sent to the eastern markets from the interior counties. Harrison, Lewis, Gilmer and Braxton have fine grazing lands, and handle a great deal of stock.*<sup>21</sup>

Correspondence between Sam Cunningham and livestock commission merchants in Baltimore such as the C. Driver & Co., The Davis Commission Company, and Kunkel Bros. & Co. in the years 1914 and 1921, respectively, suggest that Cunningham was well connected to the eastern markets (*Images 14 through 16*).

<sup>21</sup> John P. Sutton, 296.

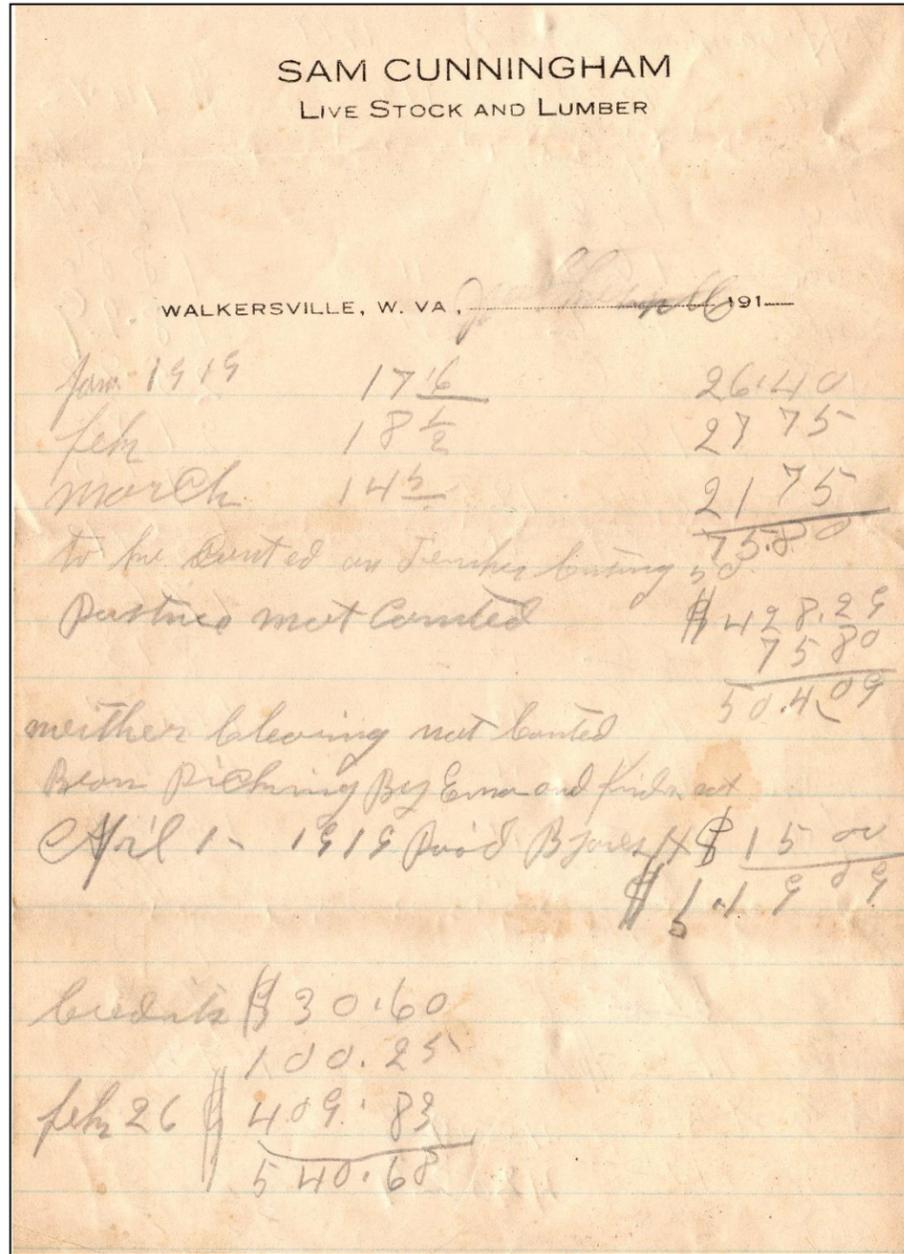


Image 11. Sam Cunningham stationery identifying him as a lumber and livestock dealer, circa 1917.

The product mix also had diverse destinations: cash trade, on-farm use, and barter. Cash trade involved not only direct sales but also futures trading. In a 1910 letter from P.W. Hardman to Sam Cunningham, Hardman offers a yearling colt to Cunningham at a price of \$70.00 (Image 17). This is an example of the direct sale form of cash trade. Another form of cash trade, futures trading, is evidenced in a 1911 letter

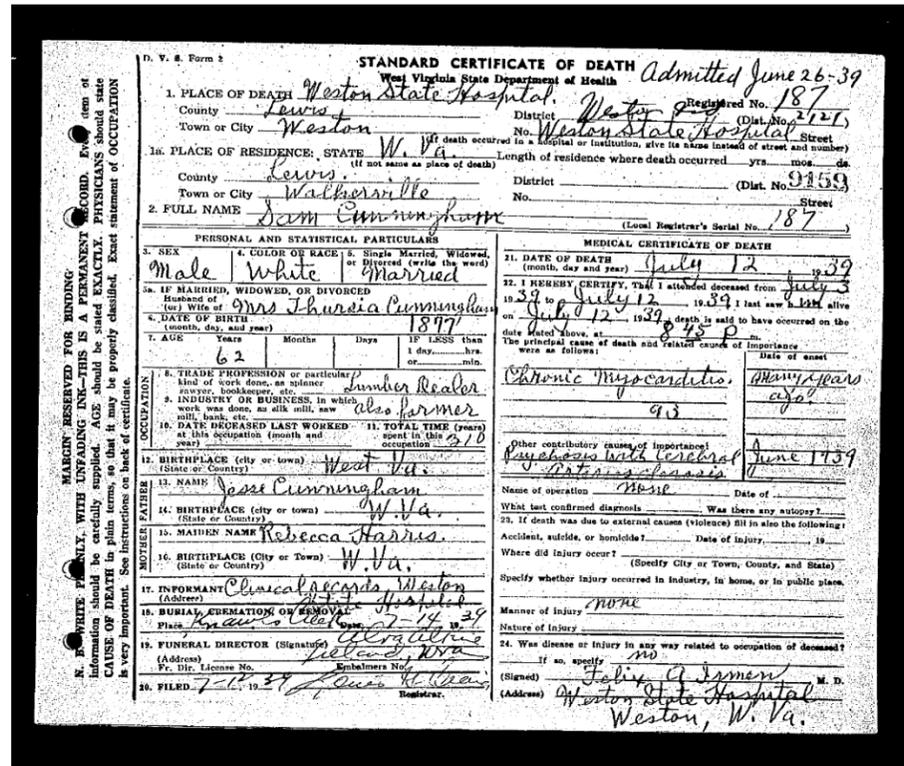


Image 12. Sam Cunningham death certificate identifying him as a lumber dealer and farmer, July 12, 1939.

from The Weston Lumber Company to Sam Cunningham in which the company sends a check to Cunningham for two rail cars of switchties (Image 18). The letter explains that the company will pay the remainder soon and reminds Cunningham that “we are only trading dollars on these ties.” The company is referring to lumber futures trading. All along the distribution chain, most firms speculate on the cash price of lumber. Between each stage—forest, mill, processor, wholesaler, retailer, builder, or end-user—economic developments may cause unfavorable price changes because of the time lag between purchase and final sale. Lumber futures trading gave mills, wholesalers, builders and retail dealers a way to manage price risk and to take advantage of price opportunities.

Folkways can tell us much about barter, or the non-monetized economic exchanges of rural Braxton County. If someone possessed an implement that was not in use, another person could arrange to borrow it or request help with the work he or she intended to do. For example, in a 1932 letter from W.M. (Bill) Myers to Sam Cunningham, Myers asked to borrow his cross-cut saw since he knew Cunningham was not using it (Image 19).

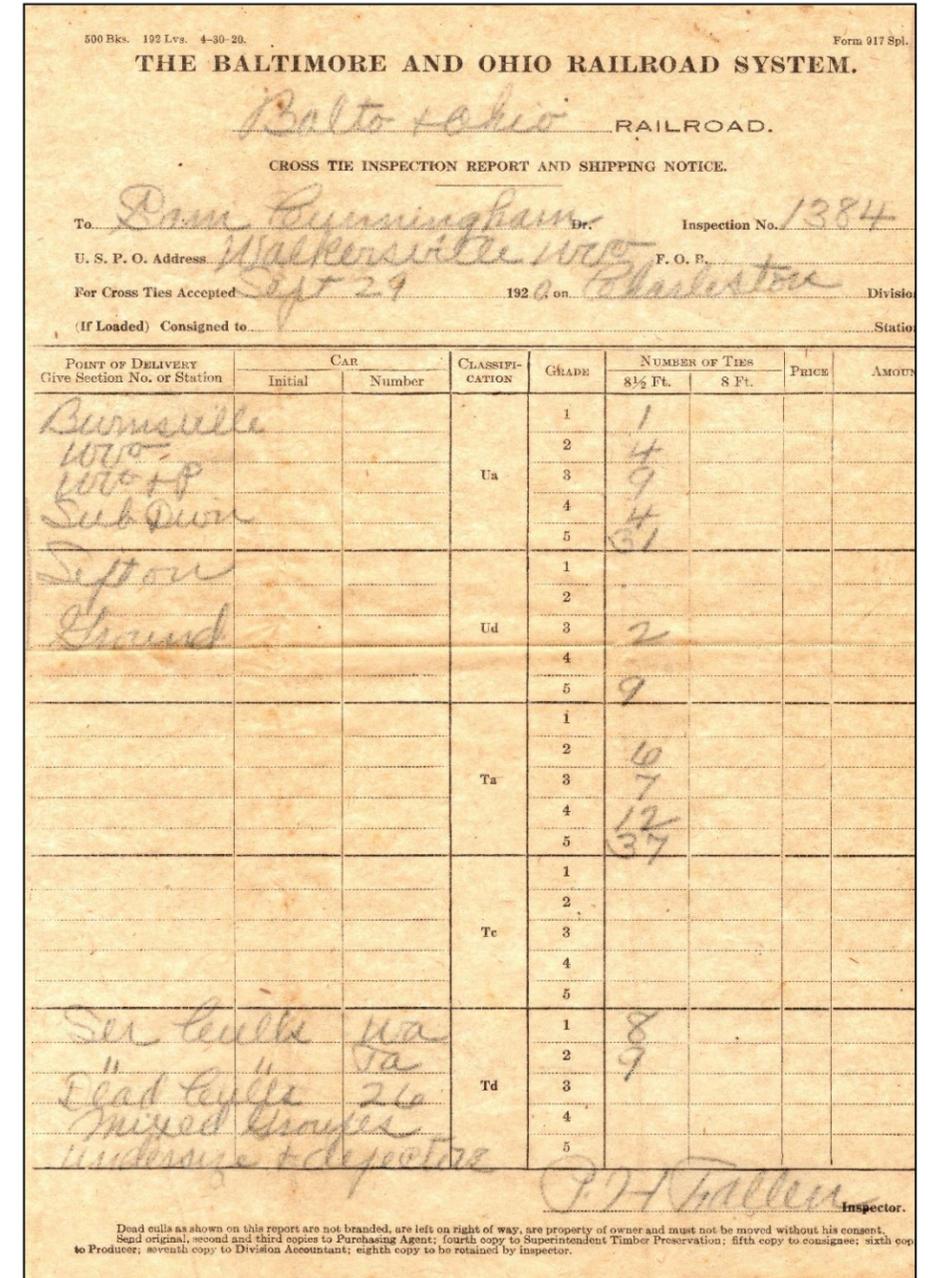


Image 13. B&O inspection report and shipping notice for cross-ties for Sam Cunningham, date unknown.

C. DRIVER Cattle Salesman J. H. HOOVER F. H. DRIVER J. C. KING Sheep Salesman

**C. DRIVER & CO.**  
**COMMISSION MERCHANTS**  
 FOR THE SALE OF CATTLE, SHEEP AND CALVES  
 UNION STOCK YARDS  
 BALTIMORE *Oct 10<sup>th</sup>* 1914

*Mr Sam Cunningham*

*Dear Sir, If I could answer your questions I love to do it, at present our market is over stocked and hard to realize good prices I would suggest for you to hold your stock long as you can let this put work off soon I think in five weeks we have better prices + better prices, soon as news let up, if ship us we do the best we can for you this we do for all who ship to us we have snap cattle this week, I am afraid our market will be lower it had rallied last week + got better the run will be heavy for Monday any thing like a run Monday we have a slow market*

*Sincerely yours*  
*C Driver & Co*

Image 14. Letter from C. Driver & Co. to Sam Cunningham, October 10, 1914.

*A. G. (Doc.) Davis, President Thomas A. Davis, General Manager A. F. Berryman, Sec.-Treas.*

**The Davis Commission Company**  
 Live Stock Commission Merchants  
 Union Stock Yards  
 Baltimore, Md.

Reference: National Marine Bank Ship all Stock in Your Name, Our Care

Member Baltimore Live Stock Exchange Draft through National Marine Bank Baltimore, Md.

CONSIGN TO UNION STOCK YARDS, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
 PROMPT AND PERSONAL ATTENTION GIVEN TO ALL CONSIGNMENTS

**CLOSING QUOTATIONS**

CATTLE	
STEERS, good to choice.....	9.50 to 10.50
" fair to good.....	7.50 " 9.00
" medium to fair.....	6.50 " 7.00
" common to medium.....	" "
BULLS, smooth and fat.....	7.00 " 8.00
" common to good.....	5.00 " 6.00
HEIFERS, smooth and prime.....	7.50 " 8.00
" light and medium.....	6.00 " 6.50
COWS	
good to choice.....	7.00 " 8.00
" fair to good.....	5.00 " 6.00
" bologna and fair flesh.....	2.50 " 4.00
SHEEP	
Choice.....	5.00 " 6.50
Good to choice.....	4.00 " 4.50
Common to medium.....	2.00 " 3.00
LAMBS	
Choice.....	12.50 " 13.00
Fair grade.....	11.00 " 12.00
Common.....	7.00 " 9.00
CALVES	
Choice veals.....	17.50 " 18.00
Medium to good.....	16.50 " 17.00
Heavy West Virginia's.....	8.00 " 11.00
Buttermilk fed grassers.....	6.00 " 9.00
HOGS	
Heavy Hogs.....	10.00
Medium Hogs.....	11.10
Light Hogs.....	11.10
Pigs.....	10.10 " 11.10
Roughs.....	8.00 " 8.75

The extreme quotations only represent strictly prime and selected lots, and should not be entertained as a criterion of the market.

We advise all shippers to have their stock billed with the "36 HOUR LIMIT AUTHORIZED" thus avoiding delay in transit.

Monday, January 3, 1921.

Dear Sir:--

CATTLE. 60 loads today for the market. Choice heavy Steers bad-sellers and from \$1.00 to \$1.50 lower. Medium to good Steers and Cows 50c lower. Bulls strong to a shade higher.

SHEEP & LAMBS. Receipts were 1470 for the market. Light supply. Market slow.

CALVES. Receipts 615 head for the market. Good supply. Market higher on fair kind.

HOGS. 5900 for this market. Fair supply. Market lower. A good many Western bought Hogs helped to keep the market down on their weights.

When shipping Hogs remember we are fully equipped to handle them to your advantage. Give us a trial.

Ship us all you can; will get top prices for all grades of live stock.

Yours very truly,  
 THE DAVIS COMMISSION CO.

Image 15. Price quote from The Davis Commission Company, January 3, 1921.

C. E. KUNKEL SHEEP AND CALVES O. HERBERT BUNGARNER CATTLE W. W. WILSON HOGS

**KUNKEL BROS. & CO.**  
 Live Stock Commission Merchants  
 FOR THE SALE OF  
 Cattle, Hogs, Sheep, Lambs and Calves, Union Stock Yards  
 MEMBERS OF BALTIMORE LIVE STOCK EXCHANGE REFERENCE: DROVERS MECHANICS NATIONAL BANK  
 Baltimore, Md.,  
 January 3rd, 1921.

Dear Sir:

**CATTLE**

On our market Saturday and today there were 70 cars of cattle. Choice steers 9½ to 10½¢. Good 7½ to 9¢. Medium 6¢ to 7¢. Common to fair 5 to 6, Choice heifers 7½ to 8¢. Common to fair 3½ to 6¢ Best cows 5½ to 6½¢ Medium 5 to 6¢. Common to fair 2¢ to 3½¢, Fresh cows and springers \$50 to \$125. Bulls 3 to 7½¢. Choice heavy steers, very dull \$1.00 to \$1.50 lower. Medium to good steers and cows 50 to 75¢ lower. Bulls steady.

**HOGS**

Hogs 5936 on market. Medium hogs \$11.25. Lights \$11.50 per cwt. Heavies \$10.75 per cwt. Pigs \$11.50. Roughs \$8.00 to 8.75 per cwt. Stags \$7.00 to \$7.75 per cwt. Demand good.

**SHEEP AND LAMBS**

Sheep and Lambs 1477 on Market. Light supply. Market lower. We quote best lambs 12½ to 13. Culls and Mediums 7 to 11. Good sheep 5 to 6. Common to fair grades 2¢ to 4½¢. Bucks 3¢ to 5¢.

**CALVES**

Calves 615 on Market. Best calves 17½ to 18¢. Fair to good kind 13 to 15. Inferior grades 7¢ to 11. Heavy grass calves 7 to 14, according to weight and quality. Fair supply. Market higher on all grades.

Very truly yours,  
 KUNKEL BROTHERS & CO.

CONSIGN STOCK YOUR NAME - OUR CARE.

Image 16. Price quote from Kunkel Bros. & Co., January 3, 1921.

June 15, 1910.  
 Mr. Sam Cunningham  
 Walkersville W. Va.,  
 Dear Sir  
 I have decided to let you  
 have my yearling colt at  
 \$70.00 if you want him  
 at that money.  
 Respt,  
 P.W. Hardman

Image 17. Letter to Sam Cunningham from P.W. Hardman, June 15, 1910.

J. C. ROANE, PRES. & GEN. MGR. W. B. HOBKINS, VICE PRES. W. LEE JACK, TREAS. CHAS. B. GOODWIN, SECR.  
**THE WESTON LUMBER COMPANY**  
 CAPITAL STOCK \$125,000.00  
 WEST VIRGINIA HARDWOODS,  
 ROUGH AND DRESSED.  
 WESTON, W. VA. 8/18/11  
 BAND MILLS: ALLINGDALE, W. VA.; CIRCULAR MILLS: INDIAN CAMP, W. VA. PLANING MILLS: HARDWOOD FLOORING PLANT, WESTON, W. VA.  
 Mr. Sam Cunningham,  
 Harml, W. Va.  
 Gentlemen:-  
 We have received check for the switchties and enclose, herewith, check for \$ for two cars, less 2%. We will give you the remainder soon, and as you remember, we are only trading dollars on these ties, therefore, must use a part of the money a few days. However, as you said you need the funds we thought we had better send you part of it at once.  
 With reference to the switchties on the Coal & Coke we think we have a man that will load these ties, and it is possible we can load them next week. Call us up and let us know if this would suit you and whether or not you would want these loaded at Walkersville or Ireland,  
 Yours truly,  
 THE WESTON LUMBER COMPANY.  
 WLSJ/11  
 ENC.

Image 18. Letter from The Weston Lumber Company to Sam Cunningham, August 18, 1911.

It was implied that the borrower would later repay the favor by lending something in return, volunteering labor when necessary, or contributing other goods at some mutually convenient time. Within this context, a relatively poor farmer might contribute mostly labor while a relatively prosperous farmer might more readily lend equipment.

Urbanites might suppose that the workings of such subsistence-barter-and-borrow systems were sustained merely by custom or tradition.

## Cunningham Farmstead: Past and Present

Walkersville 26, 1932,  
 Jan 6, 1932,  
 Mr. Sam Cunningham,  
 Dear Sir,  
 Sam, Koontz - was telling me that you left a cross cut saw over at Peterson and I thought maybe I could borrow it if it was still over there, as I need a saw to cut a few posts with, if you can do this please let me know right away.  
 Hope you are all well,  
 Very truly yours,  
 W. M. Myers,  
 (Bill)

Image 19. Letter from W.M. (Bill) Myers to Sam Cunningham asking to borrow his cross-cut saw, January 6, 1932.

However, the sustaining factor was short-term economic benefits. Within this framework, several households had access to every tool possessed by any one of them. Within that exchange context, a tool or implement is valuable over and above its productive value; it also holds exchange value. In financial terms, this can be viewed as a system of leasing. It could also be described as selling objects piecemeal to people who, through their return favors, share in paying amortized attrition costs that otherwise would prove too costly for an object's nominal owner.<sup>22</sup>

A major change occurred in the 1920s when there was a movement to develop hard surface roads to replace dirt roads. The 1920 Good Roads Amendment to the state constitution authorized the legislature to pass a law providing for designation, construction, and maintenance of a state road system and the appointment by the governor of a three-man State Road Commission to carry out the statute. In Braxton County, new roads, such as U.S. 19, were built to connect to the Weston & Gauley Bridge Turnpike and provide a system of transportation in the region. The new roads not only provided for the efficient movement of

<sup>22</sup> Paul Salstrom, "Subsistence-Barter-and-Borrow Systems: An Approach to West Virginia's Economic History," 45-54.

# Cunningham Farmstead: Past and Present 10

agricultural goods but became a new market for the lumber industry in the years that followed. A 1932 Quotation issued by The State Road Commission of West Virginia for Sam Cunningham provided specifications for 200 guard rail posts (*Image 20*).

G108-10M-2-31

**QUOTATION**

THE COMMISSION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS.

THE STATE ROAD COMMISSION OF WEST VIRGINIA  
OFFICE OF PURCHASING AGENT  
CHARLESTON, W. VA.      2/3/32      REQ. D 5085

TO Sam Cunningham,  
ADDRESS Walkersville W. Va.

PLEASE QUOTE AND INSERT BELOW LOWEST PRICES AND CASH DISCOUNT ON ALL OR ANY PORTION OF THE MATERIAL ARTICLES DESCRIBED BELOW, DELIVERED F. O. B. Weston, West Virginia, WITH NO CHARGE FOR PACKING OR CARTAGE.

TERMS: DISCOUNT \_\_\_\_\_ % MONTHLY SETTLEMENT.

YOURS VERY TRULY,  
THE STATE ROAD COMMISSION OF WEST VIRGINIA

BIDS TO BE OPENED FEBRUARY 10TH, 1932 at 2 P. M.

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION OF ITEMS	INSERT PRICE
200	Guard Rail Posts in accordance with following specifications:  PAR. 170 -- WOOD POSTS:- All wood posts shall be of seasoned, straight and sound yellow locust, red cedar, white oak, chestnut or other approved woods. ----- The posts shall be at no place less than six (6) inches in diameter or six inches square, and shall be not less than seven (7) feet in length with bottoms sawed square, all bark, including the inner bark, removed, all knots hewn with the face and the surface shaved smooth. Posts shall be cut when the sap is down and green wood will not be used. The posts may be either air or kiln dried. For outside curing the period shall be not less than nine (9) months.  POSTS TO BE DELIVERED AT ANY POINT ADJACENT TO THE ROAD IN LEWIS COUNTY	

RETURN THIS QUOTATION AT ONCE.      SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

*Image 20. Quotation for 200 Guard Rail Posts from the State Road Commission of West Virginia, February 3, 1932.*

## 5.2 Cooperation in the World War II Era

Farmers have always cooperated with each other, but in the 1940s, this spirit of teamwork became big business as rural cooperative marketing and purchasing organizations became significant fixtures in the agricultural economy in Braxton County, West Virginia. A West Virginia Wool Marketing Association Producer's Statement for Thursia Cunningham from August 17, 1945, indicates that Cunningham had sold 123 pounds of wool at \$0.55 for a total of \$68.08 minus \$1.60 of deductions for the manager's commission and the association fee (*Image 21*).<sup>23</sup>

What had begun in the Depression as modest price support programs were now institutionalized, and farmers were becoming more and more dependent on the federal government. During World War II, the government was asking for increased production of milk, eggs, beef and veal, lamb and mutton, corn, oats, barley, rye, hay, soybeans, peanuts for oil, and vegetables. Farmers were called on to feed the nation and, to some extent, the people of its allies. State and county goals were established, and extension agents led Agricultural Adjustment Agency (AAA) committeemen in a house-to-house canvass of every farm, and the result was that every goal was overpledged. A War Food Program "1944 Farm Plan" for the Cunningham Farmstead reveals much about the farm's production in 1943 and projections for 1944 and 1945 (Table 5.2-1) (*Image 22*).

**West Virginia Wool Marketing Association**

Braxton County Wool Pool      Lot No. 11

Producer's Statement      Date August 17, 1945

Name Thursia Cunningham      Post Office Walkersville

Net Weight of Wool..... 123 lbs.

Clear Medium..... 123 lbs. at 55.35 c \$ 68.08

Rejects..... lbs. at \_\_\_\_\_ c \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Fine Staple..... lbs. at \_\_\_\_\_ c \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Fine Clothing..... lbs. at \_\_\_\_\_ c \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Tags..... lbs. at \_\_\_\_\_ c \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Wool..... 123 lbs      Total \$ 68.08

**Local Deductions**  
(See footnote)

Manager's Commission 80 c per hundred..... \$ .98

To Local Association..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

To State Association 50c per hundred..... \$ .62

\_\_\_\_\_ Balls of Twine at \_\_\_\_\_ c..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Wool Bags at \_\_\_\_\_ c..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Miscellaneous..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Deductions..... \$ 1.60

Net to Producer..... \$ 66.48

Van F. Hall      Manager  
54

NOTE:  
The wool was appraised at point of delivery and sold to Commodity Credit Corporation at the appraised price, delivered weight. Shrinkage in transit was prorated and the appraised prices reduced to cover same. Charges per cwt. established by Commodity Credit Corporation were deducted: Primary Handler \$1.75, Commodity Credit Corporation \$1.125. Freight and drayage was approximately \$1.225. Total \$4.10. State and Local Association charges are itemized in this statement.

For further information consult your manager.

*Image 21. Producer's statement from the West Virginia Wool Marketing Association for Thursia Cunningham.*

<sup>23</sup> Sam Cunningham died in 1939 so wife Thursia served as farm operator during this period.

5.2-1. War Food Program 1944 Farm Plan Summary for Cunningham Farmstead

Important Crops	1943 Acres	1944 Acres
Soybeans	2	2
Irish Potatoes	0.3	0.3
Field Corn	6	6
Hay	26.9	26.9
Home Garden	0.3	0.3
Livestock and Poultry	1944 Acres	1945 Acres
All cattle and calves	27	27
Cows and heifers for milk	3	4
All sheep and lambs	30	30
Hens and pullets	80	80
Chickens raised	110	100
Turkeys raised	72	75

A February 9, 1945, letter from the AAA transmitted payment of \$7.70 to Thurstia Cunningham for dairy products sold during the months of November and December. Enclosed with that letter were the corresponding receipts for those sales, which indicated that Cunningham was selling butterfat to the Fairmont Creamery in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

In a letter from the Braxton County Farm Bureau (Bureau) to the Cunningham family in 1945, the Bureau provided notification that the Commodity Credit Corporation would make payments to sheep and lamb producers.

**WAR FOOD PROGRAM 1944 FARM PLAN**

Farmland (acres): 294.7  
Cropland (acres): 355

(Name of 1944 operator): Thurstia Cunningham  
(Community): Walkersville  
(Address of operator): [Handwritten]

**SEC. I - IMPORTANT CROPS**

	1943 Acres	1944 Intended
1. Soybeans for beans	2	2
2. Peanuts (all)	0.3	0.3
3. Irish potatoes (all)	6	6
4. Sweet potatoes (all)	0.3	0.3
5. Tomatoes for processing	0	0
6. Green peas for processing	0	0
7. Snap beans for processing	0	0
8. Other vegetables for processing	0	0
9. Vegetables for fresh market	0	0
10. Field corn (all)	6	6
11. Wheat for grain	0	0
12. Oats for grain	0	0
13. Rye and barley for grain	0	0
14. Tobacco (kind: )	0	0
15. Tobacco (kind: )	0	0
16. Cotton	0	0
17. Hemp	0	0
18. All tame hay	26.9	26.9
19. Home garden	0.3	0.3

**SEC. II - LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY**

	Jan. 1 1944	Jan. 1 1945
21. All cattle and calves	27	27
22. Cows and heifers for milk	3	4
23. All sheep and lambs	30	30
24. Hens and pullets	80	80
25. Sows to farrow:		
a. Spring	0	0
b. Fall	0	0
26. Chickens raised	110	100
27. Turkeys raised	72	75

**SEC. III - 1943 PRODUCTION DATA**

28. Wheat for grain		Bu.
29. Corn for grain: (6 acres)	300	Bu.
30. Peanuts dug: (0 acres)		Lbs.
31. Cotton (lint)		Lbs.
32.		

**SEC. IV.** I want to cooperate in the War Food Program. The above is my best estimate of my production in 1944.  
(Signature of operator): Thurstia Cunningham (Date): 3/24/44

**SEC. V - PRODUCTION PRACTICES TO BE PERFORMED DURING 1944 PROGRAM YEAR**

Material or practice	Amount	Use or kind	Acres
33. Lining materials	187	on Tim Cunningham's land	0
34. Phosphate materials			
35. Winter cover crops			
36.			
37. Summer cover crops			
38.			
39. Erosion control practices			
40.			
41.			
42.			

**SEC. VI - FARM PRODUCTION PRACTICE ALLOWANCE**

Items for Payment	Acres (a)	Rate (b)	Amount (c)	Amount (d)
43. Cropland	355	1.00	\$ 355.00	\$ 355.00
44. Pasture	81	0.50	\$ 40.50	\$ 40.50
45. Commercial orchard			\$	\$
46. Commercial vegetables			\$	\$
47.			\$	\$
48. Total			\$ 76.00	\$ 76.00

49. Total brought forward (Item 48) \$ 76.00  
50. Committee adjustment \$  
51. Farm practice allowance \$ 76.00  
52. Increase for small payment \$ 14.00  
53. Farm materials allowance \$ 90.00

(Signature of community committee member): Ben [Handwritten]

Image 22. War Food Program 1944 Farm Plan for Cunningham Farmstead, 1943.

Cunningham Farmstead: Past and Present

The letter goes on to explain: "To be eligible for payments your sheep and lambs must be sold to a legally authorized slaughterer. You should retain your sales accounts, invoices, and other evidence showing the weight and purchasers of all lambs and sheep sold or after August 5, 1945...payments are to be made through your county Agricultural Adjustment Agency office, and your sales account should be presented to them."

Ultimately, the high demand on farmers combined with the severe shortage of farm labor during the war could only be met by making individual farmers more efficient and productive. So, even in the middle of the war, farm equipment manufacturers were improving their tractors and implements. And despite rationing of raw materials for farm equipment, farmers continued to purchase new implements during the war and in the years that followed, as evidenced by French Cunningham's purchase of a sled in 1947 (Images 23 and 24).



Image 23. Sled purchased by French Cunningham in 1947.

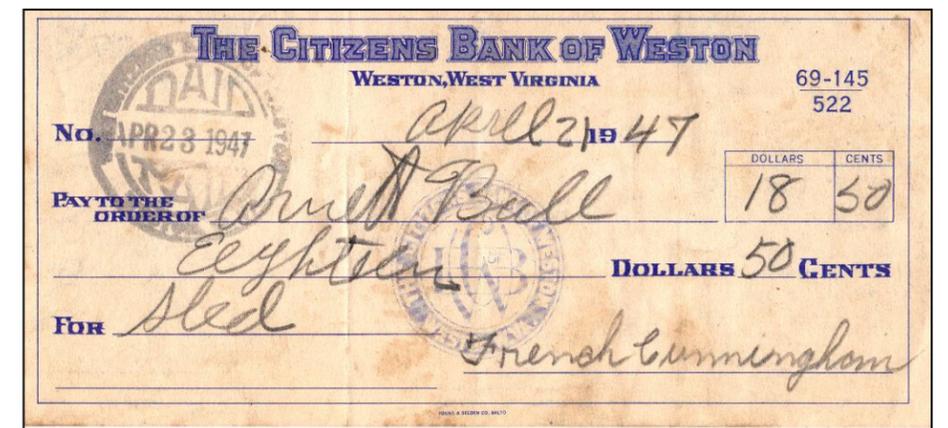


Image 24. Cancelled check endorsed by French Cunningham for sled, April 21, 1947.

## Cunningham Farmstead: Past and Present 12

Braxton County farmers' dependence on the federal government didn't end with the war. An April 16, 1946, letter from the AAA to Thursia Cunningham transmitted payment of \$12.07 for dairy products sold during the months of January, February, and March (*Image 25*). Enclosed with that letter were the corresponding receipts for those sales, which indicate that Cunningham was selling butterfat to the Sumner Creamery in Akron, Ohio.

One noticeable change, however, in the post-war period was that with the help of cooperatives, such as the Central West Virginia Live Stock Marketing Association, farmers were predominantly selling their livestock locally instead of to more remote markets (*Image 26*). For example, seven remittance statements from the Weston Livestock Sales Co., Inc. to French Cunningham, son of Sam and Thursia, totaling \$1,718 reveal that the Cunninghams were selling cattle, sheep, and veal locally in 1948 and 1949 (*Image 27*).

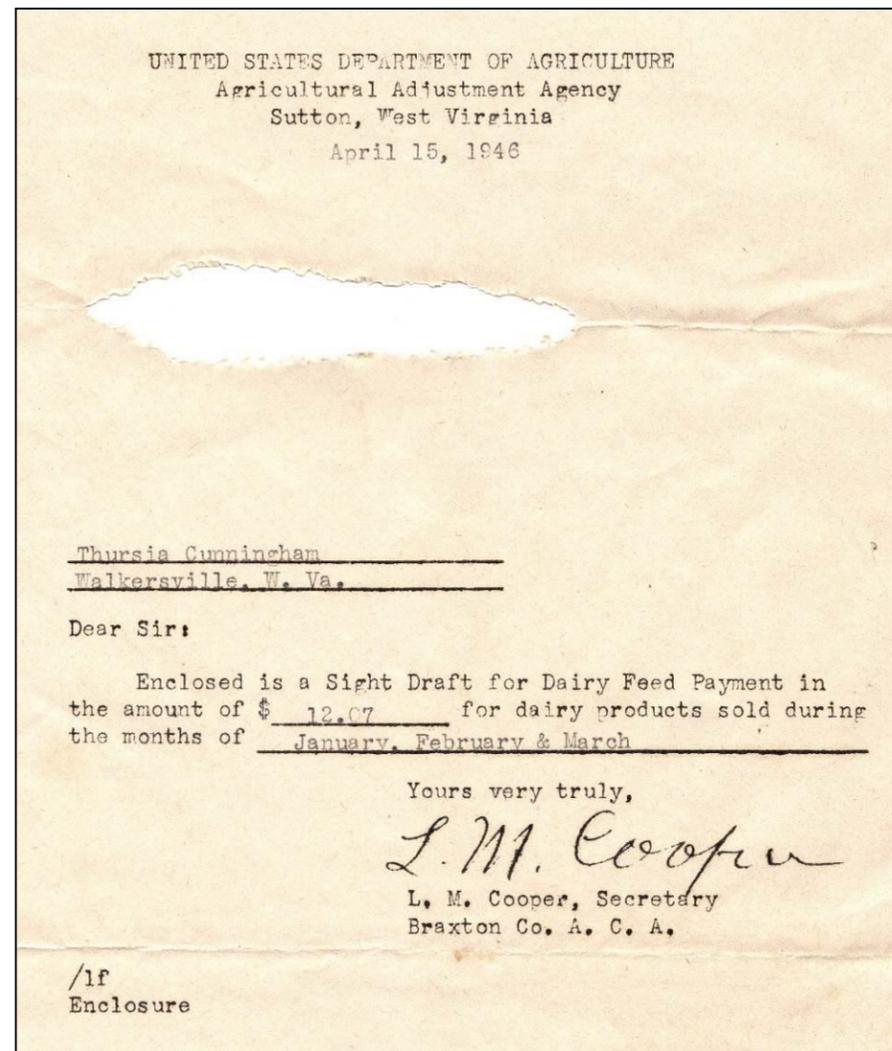
### 5.3 Out-Migration

In 1965, *Look* magazine ran an article entitled "Growing Up on the Farm, the Vanishing Life." Farming in the 1950s and 1960s had serious challenges and millions of farmers in the United States left for jobs in town or the city and Braxton County, West Virginia was no exception.

This departure was part of a larger exodus from economically troubled regions of Southern Appalachia. While the shifting of population from less rural to more urban areas was the pattern for much of the twentieth century, those who moved to growing industrial centers early in the century were encouraged to do so by the promise of new opportunities and experiences.<sup>24</sup> The outpouring of population from Appalachian regions first attracted widespread notice in the 1950s, although the promise of better opportunities outside the state also led thousands of West Virginians to neighboring regions during both world wars. These migrants would subsequently encourage the migration of friends and family members. An estimated 50 percent of those who left West Virginia eventually settled in Ohio.<sup>25</sup> Following the death of his mother in 1955, French Cunningham inherited the Cunningham Farmstead property. Cunningham, unmarried and faced with the prospect of having to make a living from the land on his own, decided to auction off the

<sup>24</sup> Ken Fones-Wolf and Ronald L. Lewis, *Transnational West Virginia: Ethnic Communities and Economic Change, 1840-1940* (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2002), 299.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*



*Image 25. Letter from the AAA to Thursia Cunningham transmitting payment of \$12.07 for dairy products sold during the months of January, February, and March, April 16, 1946.*

farm machinery and implements left to him and relocate to Youngstown, Ohio, to take a job with Republic Steel that same year.<sup>26</sup> Cunningham would return to the property only on vacations. After French's death in 1988, French's sister Maxine Cunningham Losch and niece Shirley Mick Nelson (daughter of Freda Cunningham Mick) inherited the property, but it was never inhabited full-time again after French left Braxton County in 1955.

<sup>26</sup> Shirley Nelson, personal communication, November 11, 2018.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT  
CENTRAL WEST VIRGINIA LIVE STOCK  
MARKETING ASSOCIATION

Shipment No. 17  
Clarksburg, W. Va., September 8, 1948

Account of French Cunningham P. O. Walkersville R. F. D.

LIVESTOCK No.	Kind	Home Weight	Shrink	Market Weight	MARKET PRICE Per Cwt.		AMOUNT		TOTAL	EXPENSE Per Cwt. ###40c	NET TO SHIPPER
					\$	c	\$	c			
5	Blue			360	25	00	90	00			
3	Red			182	22	00	40	04			
2	Medium			110	17	00	18	70	148	74	2 61
											146 13

Remarks:

Attached Please Find Check For Balance Due \$ 146.13  
(Please ask about anything not understood. Complete statement of each shipment is on file.)

*Image 26. Central West Virginia Live Stock Marketing Association member's statement for French Cunningham, September 8, 1948.*

WESTON LIVE STOCK SALES CO.  
INCORPORATED  
LIVE STOCK SALE EVERY TUESDAY  
PHONE 9363

Weston, W. Va., JUN 22 1948

*French Cunningham*

PEN	HEAD	KIND	MARKS	WEIGHT	PRICE	AMOUNT
183	1	cattle	471	3268	B16	145.00

*Image 27. One of seven remittance statements from the Weston Livestock Sales Co., Inc. to French Cunningham totaling \$1,718.00, June 22, 1948.*

## 6.0 ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Today, the Cunningham Farmstead comprises a circa-1910 farmhouse and seven outbuildings: a circa-1910 root cellar, a circa-1920 coal/wood shed, a circa-1920 corncrib, a circa-1940 storage shed, a circa-1995 privy, a circa-1920 feed house, and a circa-1910 barn (**Appendix A – Site Plan**). The following architectural descriptions are presented in order of location, beginning with the farmhouse, then moving outward to structures within the farmstead's orbit, and finally to those structures farthest away from the farmhouse. Architectural plans and elevations corresponding to each structure are provided in Appendix A.

### 6.1 Farmhouse

The Cunningham farmhouse is a circa-1910, two-story, five-bay, balloon-framed farmhouse constructed on a stone pier foundation. The two-story main block and one-story rear addition form an L plan (**Image 28**). The house meets the basic criteria of the I-house form: side-facing gables, one room deep, a minimum of two rooms wide, and two full stories high. However, it appears to be a variation, as the façade lacks the symmetry common with the I-house form and the first floor of the main block is three rooms wide instead of the typical two. These variations are likely due to the fact the Cunningham Farmstead had a resident hired farm laborer, Perry Townsend, and this arrangement allowed for separate quarters (with its own entry and exit) for Townsend.



*Image 28. Cunningham Farmstead farmhouse (foreground), root cellar (background), View Northwest.*

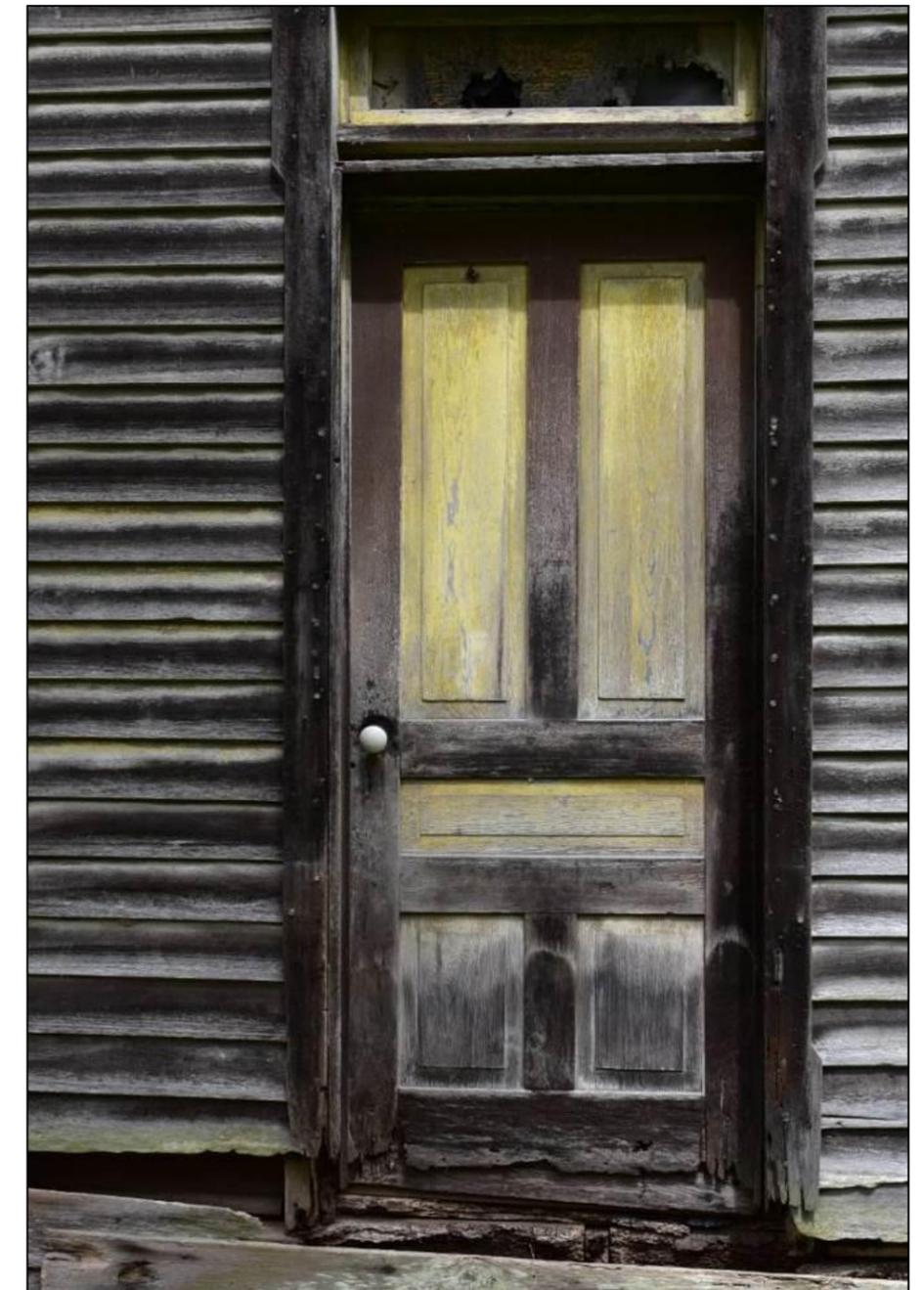
One interior cut stone chimney is located at the western third of the roof's ridge, although this is only visible from the second floor's interior (the exterior portion of the chimney was removed when the farmhouse was last roofed with standing seam metal). Another interior chimney pierces the rear addition's roof ridge.

The exterior walls of the farmhouse are clad in weatherboard, otherwise known as clapboard, and feature cornice boards. The house's roof is covered in standing seam metal; fenestration consists of two-over-two, double hung, wood sash windows. The windows are accented by simple wood surrounds with pedimented headers. The façade features two first-floor, five-panel wood entry doors surrounded by simple wood surrounds with pedimented headers and accentuated by transom windows (the glass is no longer intact) (**Image 29**). Positioned directly above the first-floor entry doors are two five-panel wood doors accented by a simple wood surrounds with pedimented headers. The upper-story doors are not topped by transom windows. These doors along with a few areas of weatherboard siding are the only elements of the farmhouse that retain hints of yellow paint.

Viewing from the exterior, the window and door configurations on the lower and upper stories suggest that a two-story, open-air porch originally extended the full-length of the facade, but is no longer intact. However, the second story's interior was left unfinished and there is a small interior staircase with a mid-quarter landing of winders leading from the first floor to the unfinished second. Further, there are no ghost lines on the façade indicative of former porches. It is, therefore, more likely that doors (instead of windows) were installed at these locations so that building materials and furniture could be moved into the second story if or when it was later finished. Presumably, the upper story doors would also allow for separate upper-story porch access for the resident farm laborers and the family. As previously noted, the upper story was never finished, but it appears as though the house was constructed with future needs in mind such as additional, separate living quarters for farm laborers and family.

The east elevation features two, two-over-two, wood sash windows—one on each story aligned right of center. The windows are accented by wood surrounds with pedimented headers.

The west elevation features two window openings, each centered on the first and second stories. The upper story opening retains its two-over-two wood sash window accented by wood surrounds with pedimented



*Image 29. Cunningham Farmstead farmhouse front entry door, View North.*

headers. The first-floor window opening is covered in plywood.

The rear elevation of the main block features a four-panel wood door and one upper story window opening; the two-over-two window is no longer intact, and the opening is covered from the inside with vertical

## Cunningham Farmstead: Past and Present 14

wood planks. Both the door and window are accentuated by wood surrounds with pedimented headers.

The rear addition, although appearing as one unit, actually comprises two separate rooms, constructed at different times. The portion engaged with the main block was contemporaneous with the main block, in 1910, or was constructed shortly thereafter. The rear portion of the addition was constructed circa-1930. This evolution of the rear addition is evidenced by a seam in the weatherboard siding that was formerly covered by a vertical piece of wood trim (*Image 30*). The rear addition also features cornice boards.



*Image 30. Cunningham Farmstead farmhouse rear addition (east elevation), View Southwest.*

The ell is also sided in weatherboard; its gable roof is covered in standing seam metal. The northwest corner of the rear addition retains one ornamental Victorian-styled roof bracket with incised scrolling (*Image 31*). An open-air, shed-roofed porch extends the length of the addition's rear elevation (*Image 32*).

The farmhouse's first floor interior comprises three first-floor rooms running east-west in the main block and two rooms in the rear addition running north-south. All of the interior ceilings and walls are clad in wood shiplap and the walls are covered by wallpaper, although the wallpaper has largely been removed in the east room. The floors are all

solid wood plank.



*Image 31. Cunningham Farmstead farmhouse, Victorian-styled roof bracket with incised scrolling at northwest corner of rear addition, View Southeast.*



*Image 32. Cunningham Farmstead farmhouse, rear shed-roofed porch, View East.*

The original function of each of the main block's first floor rooms is unknown. However, it appears as though the central room served as a living room by day (and possibly a bedroom by night). This room has a five-panel wood door with transom window opening (glass no longer intact) leading to the front of the farmhouse's exterior. This room features a fireplace with a simple wood surround and mantle. To the right of the mantle is a small built-in storage cabinet with a solid wood door. To the right of the small cabinet is a small staircase with a mid-quarter landing of winders leading from the first floor to the unfinished second floor. The room's shiplap walls are covered in floral wallpaper with a white background. The room's wood window and door trim is painted blue. Traces of floral-patterned vinyl floorcloth remain on the wood plank floors. To the left of the mantle, and tucked behind it, is a closet with a two-panel wood door (*Image 33*).

The east room was presumably always a bedroom and is much longer than it is wide, which allowed for two beds to be positioned lengthwise on the north and south walls. As noted previously, the wallpaper has mostly been removed but traces of newspaper underneath of the wallpaper remain on the shiplap walls.

The west room features two exterior doors—one five-panel wood door with a transom window opening (glass no longer intact) leading to the front exterior and one four-panel wood door leading to the rear exterior. Presumably, this room originally served as a farm laborer's quarters. The room has a fireplace with a molded wood surround and mantel (*Image 34*). The fireplace has been adapted for a gas stove—a circa-1960 modification. The room's shiplap walls are covered in wallpaper with a lattice and floral pattern. The room's window and door wood trim is painted blue. The door frames are painted blue and the door panels are painted white resembling a whitewash finish.



*Image 33. Cunningham Farmstead farmhouse, closet in central room of main block, View Northwest.*

The south room of the rear addition is engaged with the main block and is accessed from the main block by a cased opening (painted white). The room's north wall features a fireplace with a simple wood surround and mantel. The fireplace has been modified to accommodate a gas stove. A built-in cabinet, with a two-panel wood door, is located to the right of the fireplace. Based on the depth of this cabinet, it likely served as a pantry and the room, an original kitchen. The room's window and door

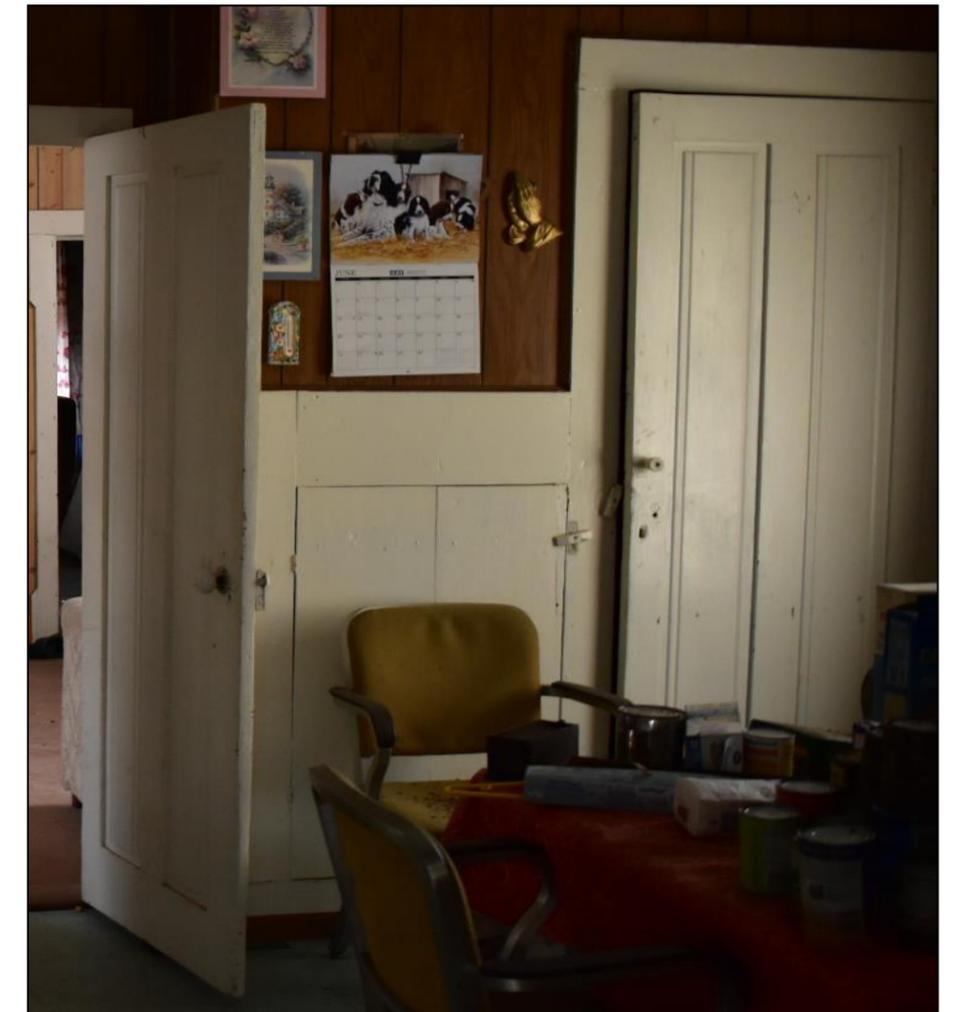


*Image 34. Cunningham Farmstead farmhouse, fireplace surround and mantel in west room of main block, View East.*

trim is painted white. The room's walls are covered in wood paneling and the floor is carpeted—both of these finishes appear to date to the late twentieth century. A circa-1960 gas light fixture remains in the ceiling. A two-panel wood door leads to the north room of the addition. The north room was a circa-1930 addition and served as a kitchen. Presumably, after this kitchen was added, the south room (original kitchen) served as a living room, and the three rooms in the main block

## Cunningham Farmstead: Past and Present

served as bedrooms. It should be noted that the lack of steps at the front entry doors on the facade further suggests that these three rooms were “back rooms” and the rear entry porch off of the rear addition's north wall served as the main “front” entrance. The circa-1930 kitchen's walls are covered in wood paneling and the floor is covered in vinyl asbestos tile. These finishes appear to date from the mid-to-late twentieth century. The room features two built-in cabinets in the south wall. These two small cabinets have solid wood doors with simple wood surrounds (*Image 35*). A large closet or pantry is also located on the south wall and has a two-panel wood door. The room's doors and wood trim work are painted white. The room's east wall features open wood shelving. A gas light fixture remains in the ceiling (*Image 36*).



*Image 35. Cunningham Farmstead farmhouse, pantry and built-in cabinet on south wall of circa-1930 kitchen, View South.*



Image 36. Cunningham Farmstead farmhouse, gas light fixture.

### 6.2 Root Cellar

A circa-1910 front gable, two-story, wood frame root cellar stands approximately 15 feet north of the farmhouse and stands on a cut stone foundation (Image 37). The gable end walls are clad in board and batten



Image 37. Cunningham Farmstead root cellar, View North.

wood siding. The eaves side walls are clad in vertical wood boards. The building's front gable roof is covered in standing seam metal. Wood

supports have recently been added under the cantilevered second story.

Access to the first story is provided by a wood door comprises diagonal wood planks. A door composed of vertical wood boards provides access to the second story.

### 6.3 Coal/Wood Shed

Located approximately 50 feet east of the farmhouse is a circa-1920, one-story, wood frame coal/wood shed (Image 38). The building's gabled roof is covered in corrugated metal and its exterior walls are clad in vertical wood boards.



Image 38. Cunningham Farmstead coal/wood shed, View East.

### 6.4 Corncrib

A circa-1920 front gable, two-story, wood frame corncrib stands approximately 125 feet east of the coal/wood shed. The building stands on a stone pier foundation and its front gable roof is covered in corrugated metal. The building's exterior walls are clad in horizontal wood slats spaced approximately two inches apart. An interior straight staircase leads to the corncrib's second story (Image 39).



Image 39. Cunningham Farmstead corncrib, View Northeast.

### 6.5 Storage Shed

Sited approximately 45 feet southwest of the corncrib is a circa-1940 shed-roofed, wood frame storage shed. The structure's roof is covered in standing seam metal and its walls are clad in vertical wood boards. Access to the interior is provided by a door composed of vertical wood boards (*Image 40*).

### 6.6 Privy

A circa-1995 shed-roofed, wood frame privy is sited approximately 30 feet west of the storage shed. This privy, which replaced a circa-1960 privy, was constructed by hunters using the property in the decades after French Cunningham left in 1955. The building's exterior is clad in board and batten siding; the shed roof is covered in corrugated metal. Access to the interior is provided by a four-panel wood door (*Image 41*).

### 6.7 Barn

Located approximately 250 feet southwest of the farmhouse at the base of the driveway along CR 4-4 is a circa-1910, front gable, one-and-a-half-story, balloon-framed barn (*Image 42*). The barn's wood sill rests on a poured concrete footer. The barn's exterior is clad in weatherboard siding. All of the barn's doors comprise vertical wood boards (*Image 43*). The front gable roof is covered in standing seam metal; a metal

ventilator pierces the roof's ridge line at its mid-point. Window openings along the eaves sides as well as interior stalls indicate the lower story served as animal housing. The half-story served as a hay loft. A silo foundation is located adjacent to the barn's east elevation. The barn's east wall is partially missing where the silo once abutted it (*Image 44*).

### 6.8 Feed House

A circa-1920 gable-roofed feed house stands approximately 50 feet northwest of the barn (*Image 45*). The structure is constructed of terra cotta hollow block. Vertical wood boards cover the gables. The structure's gable roof is covered in corrugated metal. The interior is accessed by a door composed of vertical wood boards.



Image 40. Cunningham Farmstead storage shed, View Southeast.

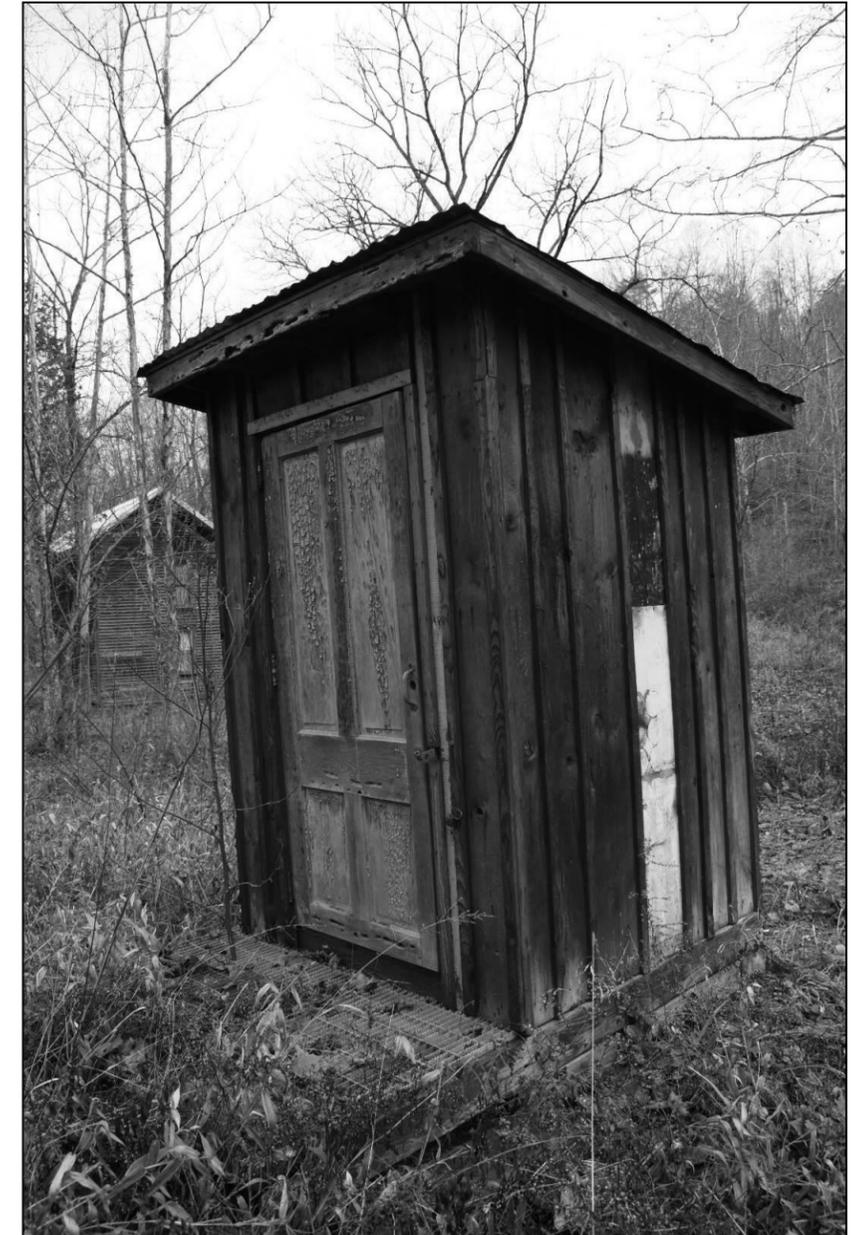


Image 41. Cunningham Farmstead, privy, View Northwest.



*Image 42. Cunningham Farmstead barn (north elevation), View South.*



*Image 44. Cunningham Farmstead barn (east elevation), View West.*



*Image 43. Cunningham Farmstead barn (west elevation), View South.*



*Image 45. Cunningham Farmstead feed house (south and west elevations), View Northeast.*

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

A variety of sources places the Cunningham Farmstead in the context of Braxton County's agricultural history. The secondary sources illustrate the importance of transportation, turnpikes and railroads in particular, in the development of the farm and Braxton County. Primary evidence from deeds, wills, census enumerations, cancelled checks, receipts, statements, and correspondence shows farm activity diversifying. Oral history gives us a sense of the full historical extent of the farmstead by identifying and locating buildings and structures that are no longer extant. The architectural details convey historic construction techniques and the arrangement of space inside the structures and spatial planning within the farmstead.

Looking over the history of the region, Braxton County, and this property, a mosaic of farms, buildings, turnpikes, towns, lumber camps, rivers and creeks, soil, mountains, and railroads comes into view to shape a historical portrait. All of these facets in the region's history bear on the history of the farm. The chain of events associated with the county's history chronicle the human events that shaped its current character. The buildings—all utilizing lumber processed at saw mills—illustrate the change and innovation in American architecture in the early twentieth century. As a whole, acknowledging the significance of the Cunningham Farmstead property enriches West Virginia's architectural record and central West Virginia's history.



*Image 46. Cunningham Farmstead barn (left) and feed house (right), View South.*

**8.0 REFERENCES**

Ancestry.com. *1920 United States Federal Census [database on-line]*. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

Fones-Wolf, Ken, and Ronald L. Lewis. *Transnational West Virginia: Ethnic Communities and Economic Change, 1840-1940*. Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2002.

Noble, Allen G., and Richard K. Cleek. *The Old Barn Book: A Field Guide to North American Barns & Other Farm Structures*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006.

Park, Barbara, "Crossties, Creosote, and Wood Preserving: The Foundation of Railways, the Life-blood of My Family," *The Sentinel: A Quarterly Magazine Published by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Historical Society*, Volume 38, Number 4: Fourth Quarter, 2016.

Salstrom, Paul. "Subsistence-Barter-and-Borrow Systems: An Approach to West Virginia's Economic History" in *West Virginia History*, Volume 51, 1992.

Sperow, Charles. "Agriculture." e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia. 04 September 2012. Web. 07 March 2019.

Sutton, John P. *History of Braxton County and Central West Virginia*. Sutton, WV, 1919.

Tetra Tech. *Mountain Valley Pipeline Project, Historic Property Treatment Plan, Cunningham (Losch) Farmstead (BX-0351)*, September 2017.

Thomas, Jerry B. *An Appalachian New Deal: West Virginia in the Great Depression*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1998.

**Primary Sources**

Braxton County Courthouse, Sutton, West Virginia.

Deed Book 1, page 242.

Deed Book 7, page 6.

Deed Book 8, page 168.

Deed Book 81, page 413.

Deed Book 30, pages 212-214

**Cunningham Family Archives**

1. Cancelled check endorsed by Sam Cunningham for "silo work," October 15, 1920.
2. Letter from Sears, Roebuck, and Co. to Thursia Cunningham regarding radio battery order, circa 1942.
3. Burnsville Milling Company receipt, April 17, 1911.
4. Gregg Grocery Company receipt, February 12, 1907.
5. Letter from H.C. Alexander Brokerage Co., to Sam Cunningham regarding prices of hay, flour, corn, oats, and mill feeds, January 27, 1915.
6. Acme-Evans Company receipt, December 30, 1914
7. Sam Cunningham stationery identifying him as a lumber and livestock dealer, circa 1917.
8. Sam Cunningham death certificate identifying him as a lumber dealer and farmer, July 12, 1939.
9. B&O inspection report and shipping notice for crossties for Sam Cunningham, date unknown.
10. Letter from C. Driver & Co. to Sam Cunningham, October 10, 1914.
11. Price quote from The Davis Commission Company, January 3, 1921.
12. Price quote from Kunkel Bros. & Co., January 3, 1921.
13. Letter to Sam Cunningham from P.W. Hardman, June 15, 1910.
14. Letter from The Weston Lumber Company to Sam Cunningham, August 18, 1911.
15. Letter from W.M. (Bill) Myers to Sam Cunningham asking to borrow his cross-cut saw, January 6, 1932
16. Quotation for 200 Guard Rail Posts from The State Road Commission of West Virginia, February 3, 1932.

17. Producer's statement from the West Virginia Wool Marketing Association for Thursia Cunningham.

18. War Food Program 1944 Farm Plan for Cunningham Farm, 1943.

19. Cancelled check endorsed by French Cunningham for sled, April 21, 1947.

20. Letter from the AAA to Thursia Cunningham transmitting payment of \$12.07 for dairy products sold during the months of January, February, and March, April 16, 1946.

21. Central West Virginia Live Stock Marketing Association Member's Statement for French Cunningham, September 8, 1948.

22. Remittance statement from The Weston Livestock Sales Co., Inc. to French Cunningham, June 22, 1948.

**Interviews**

Shirley Nelson, personal communication, November 11, 2018.

---