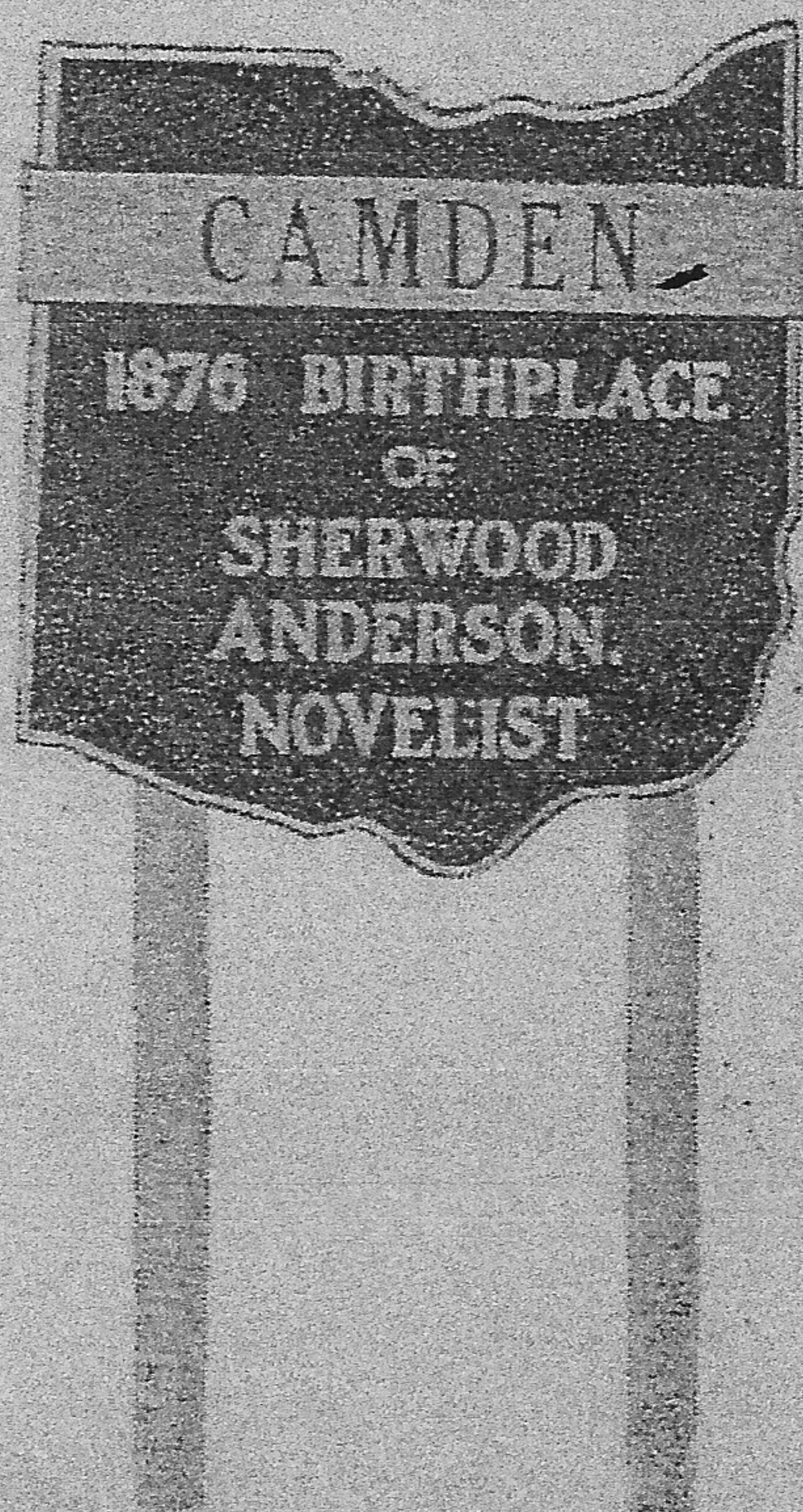


CAMDEN

SESQUICENTENNIAL

SOUVENIR



1818

Perry Printing Co. Inc., Middletown, Ohio 45042

1968

STATE OF OHIO
Executive Department

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Columbus

P R O C L A M A T I O N

VILLAGE OF CAMDEN SESQUICENTENNIAL

1968

WHEREAS, the Village of Camden will celebrate its Sesquicentennial during the period July 4 - 13, 1968; and

WHEREAS, through the inspiring leadership of the Village officials, business, civic, educational and religious leaders an interesting program of activities and contests are planned for the entire 10 day period climaxed with a Grand Parade Saturday July 13; and

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate for the thriving Village of Camden to look back upon its one hundred and fifty years of history that began in the early years of Ohio's statehood; and

WHEREAS, the humble beginnings of the Village of Camden in 1818 are described in the old Ohio chronicles of that period; and

WHEREAS, originally named Dover by William Moore one of the first settlers - the name was changed to Newcom and then to Camden in honor of the City of Camden, South Carolina. By 1839, the village boasted of 350 inhabitants. There were 54 dwelling houses, 3 taverns, 5 dry goods stores, 3 groceries, 2 churches a "number of mechanics":

NOW, THEREFORE, I, James A. Rhodes, Governor of the State of Ohio, do hereby designate the period July 4 - 13, 1968, as

VILLAGE OF CAMDEN SESQUICENTENNIAL

and I urge the citizens of Preble County and surrounding counties to join the residents of the Village of Camden in celebrating this historic occasion.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF,
I have hereunto subscribed
my name and caused the Great
Seal of the State of Ohio to
be affixed at Columbus, this
23rd day of February, in the
year of Our Lord, One Thousand
Nine Hundred and Sixty-Eight.

James A. Rhodes
GOVERNOR

CAMDEN SESQUICENTENNIAL, INC.

JULY 7 - 13, 1968

GENERAL CHAIRMAN—MAYOR JOHN MATT

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

John Matt — Publicity
E. F. Lackey — Treasurer
Dick Cunningham — Program & Parade
Loren Elliott — Concessions
James Feix — Grounds
Dr. H. G. Headley — Historical Booklet

PUBLICITY

John Matt — Chairman
Mrs. Myrna Matt Louis DeLuca
Paul Pheanis William Miller
 Mrs. Carol Muenchenback

PROGRAM & PARADE

Dick Cunningham — Chairman
Bob Mondello David Dickson
Lester Schlafman Homer Bacon
 Mrs. J. F. Daugherty

CONCESSIONS

Loren Elliott, Chairman
Robert Barber Noel McComas
Gene Barnet Norman Mabry
Don Buell Raleigh Melton
Ted Buel Edward Michael
Paul Chaney Herman Pahnke
Lloyd Cross Paul Pheanis
James Curtis Dennis Robertson
Ray Dill Gene Sandlin
Russell George John Stubbs
Floyd Hileman Charles Ward
 Archie Wysong

GROUND

Tom Smith — Chairman
James Feix Loren Elliott

HISTORY

Dr. H. G. Headley — Chairman
Mrs. Ruth Neff Mrs. Jane Headley
Miss Nelle Jones Harry Neff
Mrs. Shirley Duskey Charles Douglas
 James Feix

ANTIQU

Robert Beasley

INCORPORATION

Herbert Wagers, Attorney

FINANCIAL

E. F. Lackey

SAFETY & LAW ENFORCEMENT

James Doty

COMMUNITY SING NIGHT

Mrs. Barbara Wysong

This book was made possible by the businessmen and businesswomen as noted on the bottom of the pages. Please thank them with your patronage.

The material compiled for this short sketch of Camden's history was taken from THE HISTORY OF CAMDEN 1803 - 1955, by Mrs. Ruth Neff, and from the Camden Archives located at the Camden Public Library. These archives were instituted by Miss Nelle Jones.



View from Shellenbarger Hill

THE VILLAGE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Camden is a beautiful little town in Ohio along the Seven Mile Creek at the intersection of U.S. Route 127 and State Route 725. It is located in a valley which once was covered with a mighty forest that afforded protection and an abundance of game to the tribes of Indians who roamed this area. The beauty of the region together with the rich, productive soil attracted many settlers both from the South and from the East.

The first settlers to arrive were the David E. Hendricks family in 1803 and settled upon the site of which is now Camden. Two years later, on October 3, 1805, his son, George D. Hendricks, was born on the land that later became known as North Liberty Street. This was the first white male child to be born in Preble County.

By 1818 a sufficient number of settlers had arrived from the South and East that there had arisen a growing need for a town in Somers Township. So James Moore, James Black and Isaac Sutton chose a spot in the valley of the Seven Mile Creek on the west side of the stream. On this site in the spring of 1818 a village called Dover, later named Camden, was laid out, but the description of the plot of the town as laid out by Moore, Black, and Sutton was not recorded until July 4, 1818.

Six years after the village was started, on May 26, 1824, the first post office was established. The office was not given the name of Dover, but it was called Newcomb because the villagers discovered there was another town in Ohio by the name of Dover. The first Dover had a post office which had been started earlier than 1824 so the little village changed the name to Newcomb in honor of George Newcomb of Montgomery County, who at that time was state senator from the district of which Preble County was a part. Newcomb's first post office was located in the home of their postmaster, Ira K. Place, who lived on the southeast corner of Main and Cottage Streets—now the home of Archie Armstrong. Mr. Place remained in office a long term of years until 1836. For the first few months not much mail was handled. The postal



Ira K. Place — First Mayor 1832
First Postmaster 1824

receipts during the first quarter of 1824 were exactly three dollars and seventy-five cents. For several years the location of the post office changed whenever there was a new postmaster. In the late 1850's the post office was located in the Bohn Building (now known as the Jefferies Building). After that it moved several times until it finally went to the Commercial Bank Building (Dearth



Jack Woosley — Camden Postmaster — 1968

Compliments of Webb's Drugs — Number 1 N. Main St., Camden

CAMDEN SESQUICENTENNIAL, INC.

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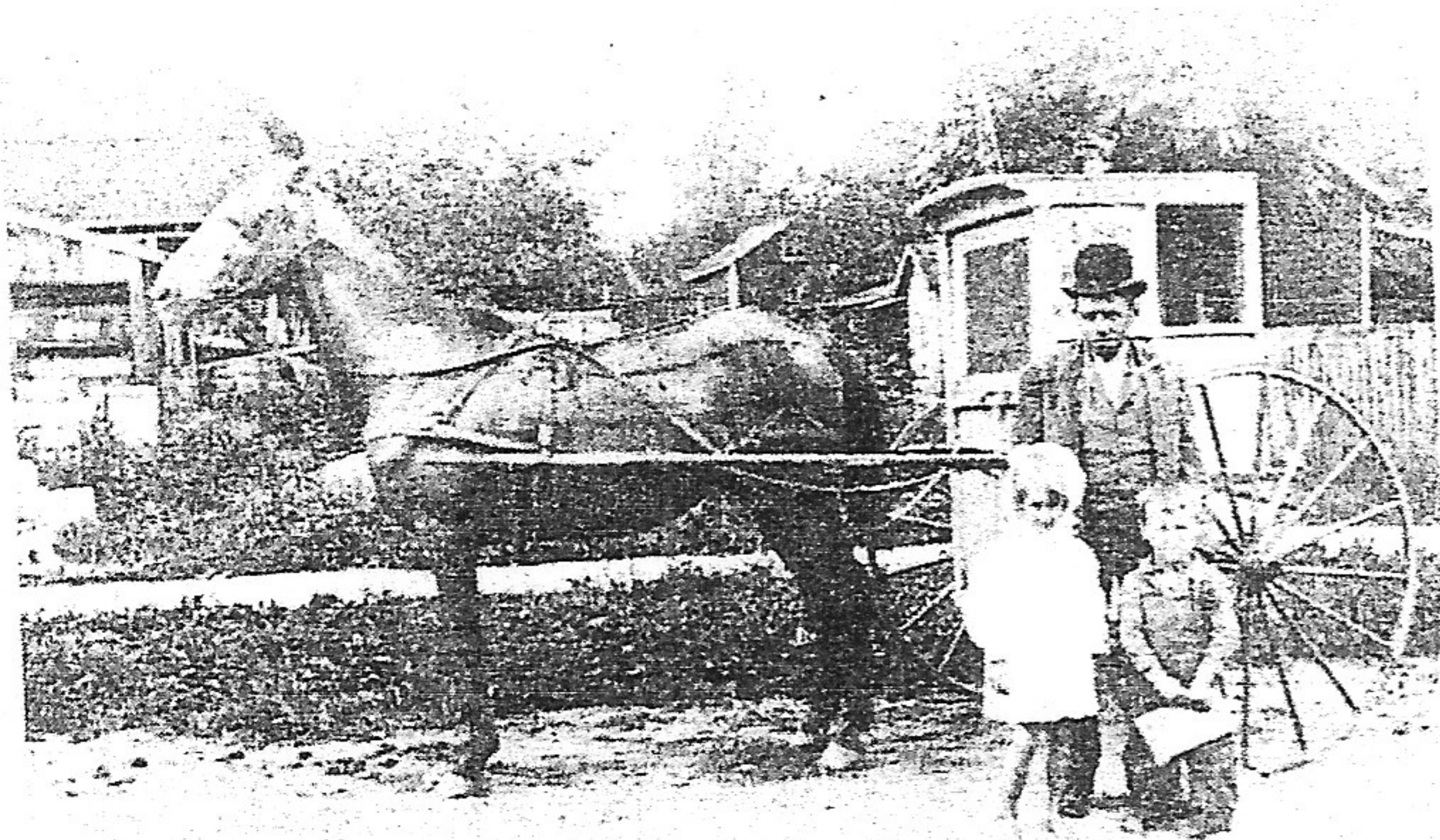
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View from Shellenbarger Hill

Building) in 1896 where it remained until 1928 when it was moved to the Masonic Temple. Here the post office stayed until a permanent building was erected in 1958 at its present location on West Central Avenue.



Rural Delivery comes to Camden in 1901. Scott Marshall, mail carrier; Mary Windate — Russell Lamb. Camden was the first town in Preble County to have rural free delivery of mail. Frank Edmonson and Scott Marshall were the first two rural mail carriers.

The town of Newcomb did not remain unincorporated long. It was incorporated by an act of the Legislature on February 10, 1831.

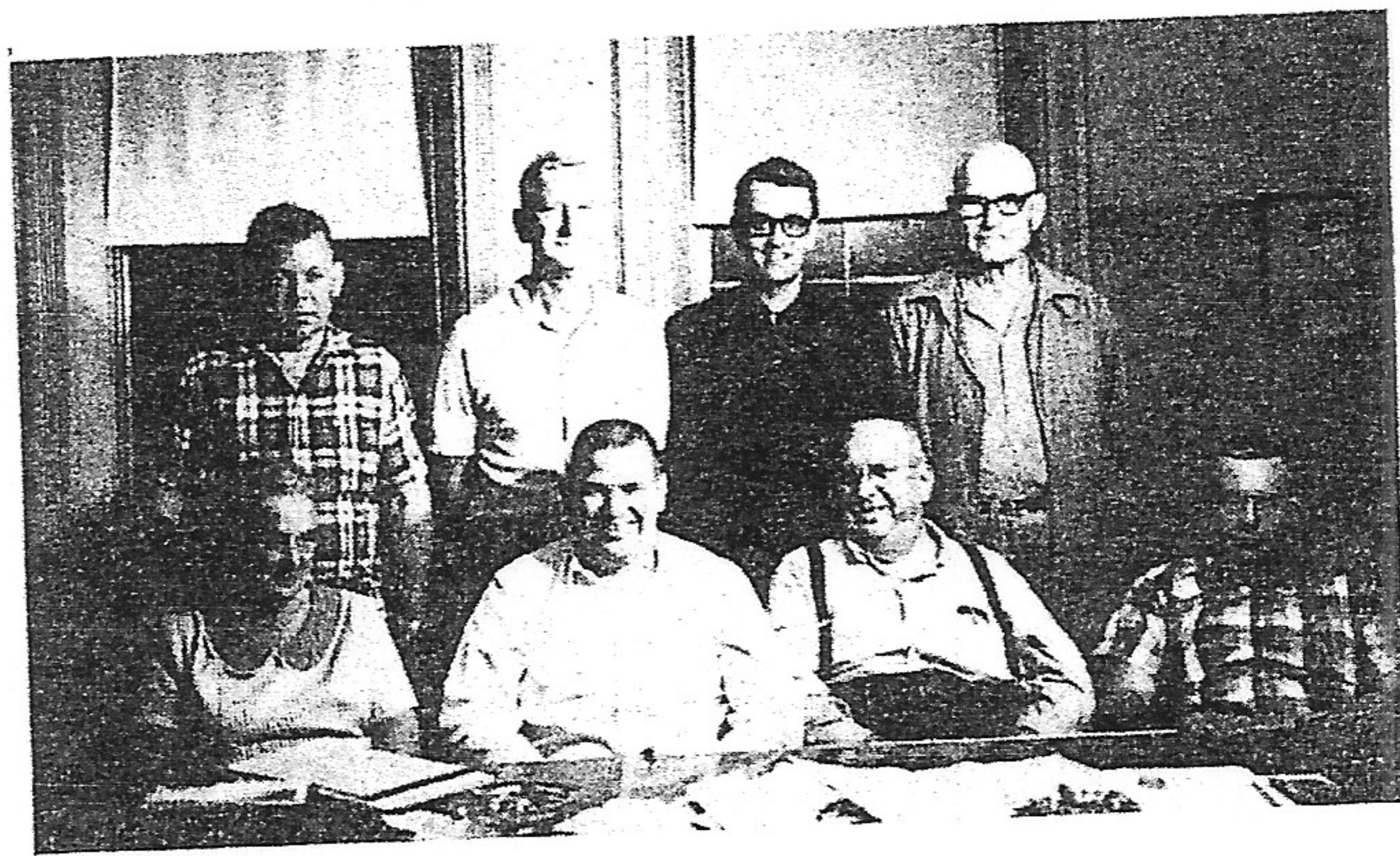
In compliance with an act the village officers were chosen. Ira K. Place, who had been the first postmaster, was chosen in 1832 as the first mayor.



John Matt — Camden Mayor — 1968

Philip Rizer was the first recorder, the office which is now called clerk. James Alfred, Samuel Cornwell, George Benton, Eli DeMoss, and Joseph Mitchell were trustees or councilmen. At the first

meeting of these officers, William Rizer was appointed treasurer and Jonathan H. Potter was the marshal. The same form of government has continued in Camden during these many years.



Camden Council — 1968

Top row — Chas. Douglas, Clarence Beasley, Mayor John Matt, Harley Johnson
Seated — Anna Graham, Bob Green, Orville Wood, Elmer Bach

The name of the village was changed again in 1835. This time the name Newcomb was changed to Camden which was bestowed as a sort of memorial of Camden, South Carolina where a Revolutionary War battle was fought. The name Camden has remained the official appellation ever since.

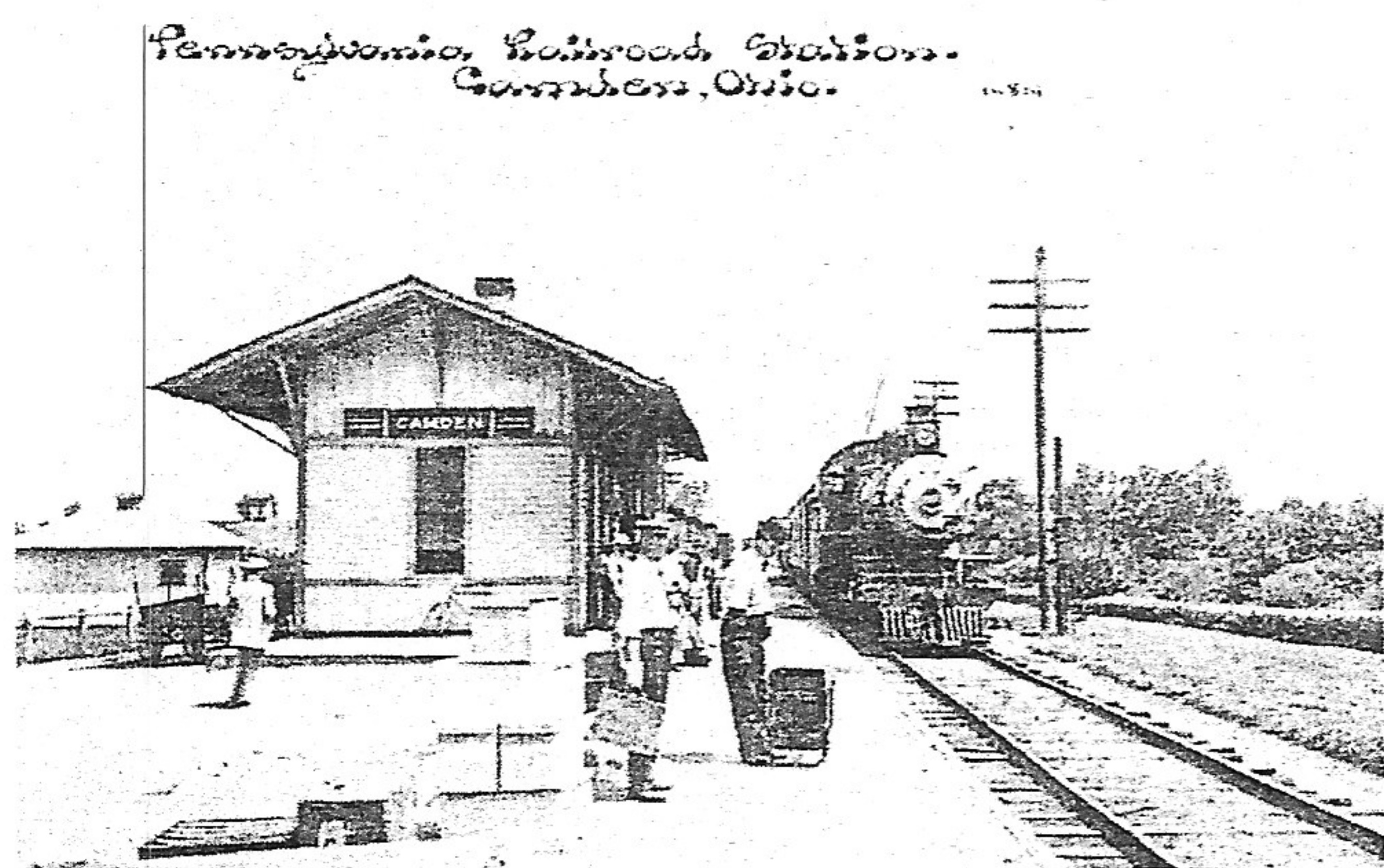
Soon the people of Camden became vitally and actively concerned with better means of transporta-



Jim Doty — Camden Policeman 1968

Compliments of First National Bank — Camden

tion. The state had been building canals since 1825 to connect the Ohio River to Lake Erie, but many interior villages such as Camden remained without transportation facilities. In 1849 the long-sought better means of transportation in Camden seemed closer to being realized. That was the year the Eaton and Hamilton Railroad Company was organized to build a railroad from Eaton to Hamilton "by the most feasible route". The route was to follow the Seven Mile Creek through Camden. The railroad was finished and in operation in the spring of 1852. Its first trip occasioned great excitement in Camden and throngs were at the station to view the spectacle. The railroad in 1853 became the possession of the Cincinnati, Richmond, and Chicago Railroad Company and continued under that name until it was bought by the Pennsylvania line in 1890. That company has maintained a line through Camden ever since.



Pennsylvania Railroad Station — For many years the train was the main means of transportation in and out of town.

By 1856 Camden had a fire engine but it also had a problem of finding a building to house it. On April 14, a councilman reported he had procured a building for fifty cents a month for one year. The next year hooks and ladders were added to their fire department. In 1866 the fire fighters of Camden organized a fire company which was called "The Roarers", composed of fifty young men. Ten years later the fire company called The Deluge Fire Company was organized with thirty

*Compliments of The Ark Dairy Bar — Camden
Camden Hardware*



Camden Fire Dept. — Fire at Arlington Hotel 1899

men. The Camden Fire Department was created in 1895 with fifteen members. Each member was to receive fifty cents for each drill, and a dollar for each actual fire service and such additional sum as the council regarded as proper. The town today is equipped with modern fire fighting apparatus which consists of two pumpers and a water wagon with twenty-two men in the department. The Camden Fire Department now not only serves Camden but all of Somers Township.



Camden Fire Department

Things were looking brighter for the village of Camden in 1870 because their first eight streetlights were installed in that year. The new streetlights were a source of joy to the people but they

too, presented a problem. To find and to keep a man who was willing and reliable to light the lamps at a stipulated time, put them out each morning, keep them filled with gasoline, and keep the wicks trimmed was no easy task.

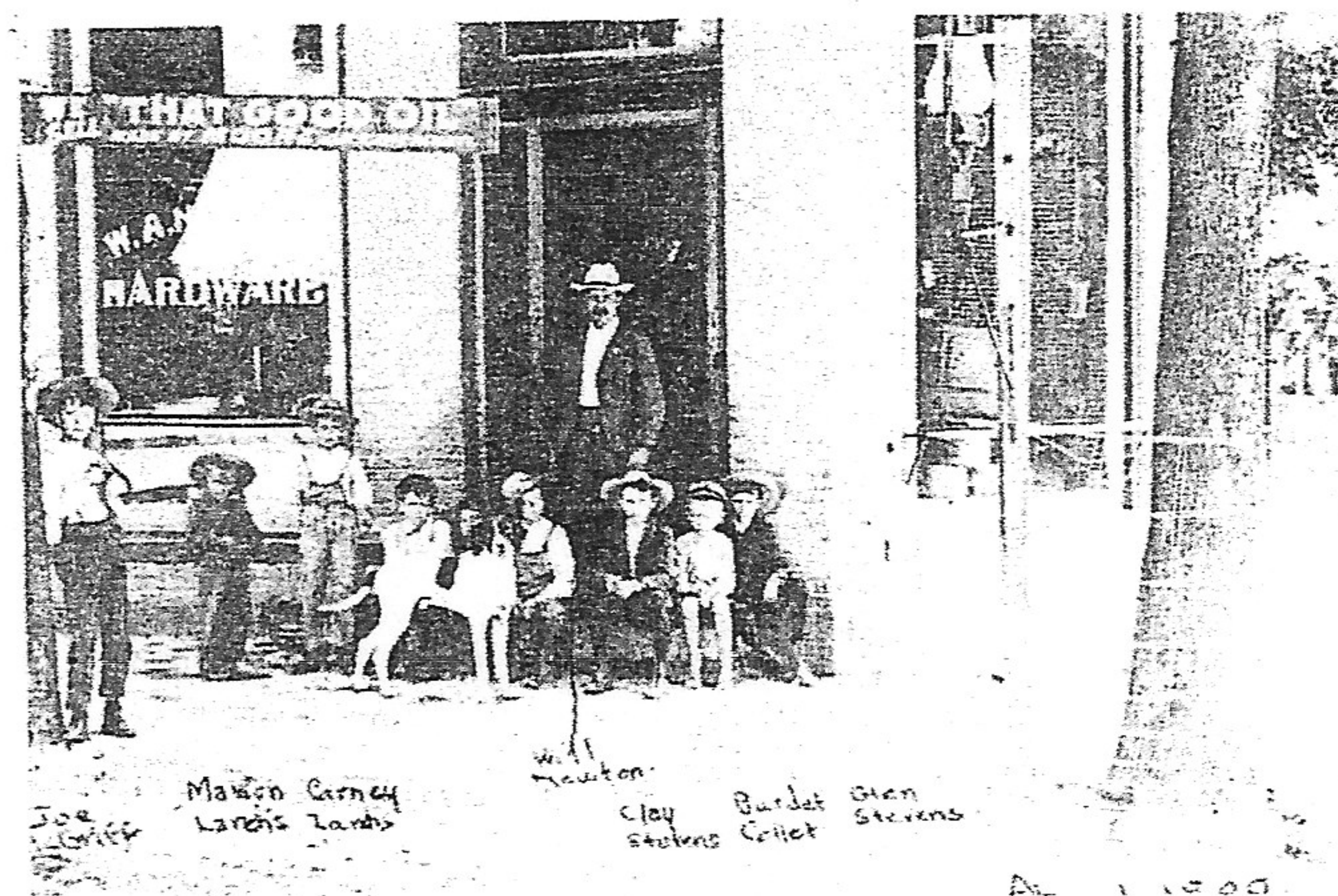
Camden citizens soon realized the great advantage of having their town lighted by electricity, but it was not until 1898 that the Camden Electric Light Company was formed. On August 12, 1899 the new light plant was put into operation. It was located along the west side of the railroad, north of the east end of Hendricks Street. The brick building still stands which housed the machinery which consisted of a first class dynamo with an Atlas engine of fifty-three horse power.

After a few years the Camden Electric Company dissolved and on September 15, 1904 the plant and all its stock was sold at public auction. The new owners were not able to give their full attention to the plant, so on February 6, 1908, Charles Houston became the sole owner and proprietor of the Camden Electric Company. Shortly after Houston bought it, Palmer Morris acquired an interest in it. It was during the time that Houston and Morris operated the plant that the machinery was moved to the Barnet Mill Building on the east side of Seven Mile Creek. August 17, 1912 Palmer Morris became sole owner of the Electric Light and Milling Company. As more people began to use electricity there became a demand for better service. The community was quite happy when in December 1915 a Richmond light and power company purchased the franchise and equipment of the Camden Electric Light Company from Palmer Morris and the local plant was abandoned. The power and service provided by the new company, the Liberty Light and Power Company, was very satisfactory and it served the Camden community until 1934 when its franchise was bought by the Dayton Power and Light Company. D. P. & L. has furnished power to Camden and the surrounding country ever since.

Another public service that came to Camden

was when the telephone became a reality. Camden's first telephone was moved from *The Gazette* office (Caskey's furniture store) and installed in the Charles Morlatt store (Now Camden Hardware) in the early part of 1881. In the fall it was again moved to J. A. Huffman's office. This was the only telephone in town for sometime and was connected with one telephone in Eaton. For several years Camden continued this same arrangement to have one telephone in town connected with only one in Eaton and the messages were delivered from one center. Mr. Sam Morton who lived three miles west of Camden built a line from his farm to Mr. Sylvester May's store (Duckwall Building) where the town telephone was moved in 1899. Through this Camden phone Mr. Morton was able to talk to Eaton.

Mr. Morton's interest in telephone service grew. In May 1900 the town council granted Samuel Morton, L. D. Lesh, and C. F. Brooks the right to erect lines and an exchange for telephone service in Camden. The company which these men organized was known as the Camden Telephone Company. The Camden exchange was finished and in operation on September 23, 1901. When the exchange opened twenty-five telephones had been installed. The second floor of the Collet Building housed the exchange until 1907 when they moved to their newly purchased building on the north-



Bill Newton's Hardware Store about 1900, now Telephone Building

Compliments of Barney's Texaco Service — Camden
Camden Nursery & Florist
Capitol Cleaners — Marjorie White — Camden
Collet's Clothing Store — Camden

east corner of Main and Central Avenues. The Camden Telephone Company changed hands in the late 1920's and again in 1931 when its facilities were purchased by the present owner. The name of the company remained the same until 1935 when it was reorganized under the name of Ohio United Telephone Corporation. During the last several years changes have been made in the name of the company. Today the telephone company that serves Camden is known as the United Telephone Company of Ohio. Not until November 19, 1958 were the telephones of the Camden exchange converted to dial service. All the nearly 850 telephones of Camden were converted simultaneously.

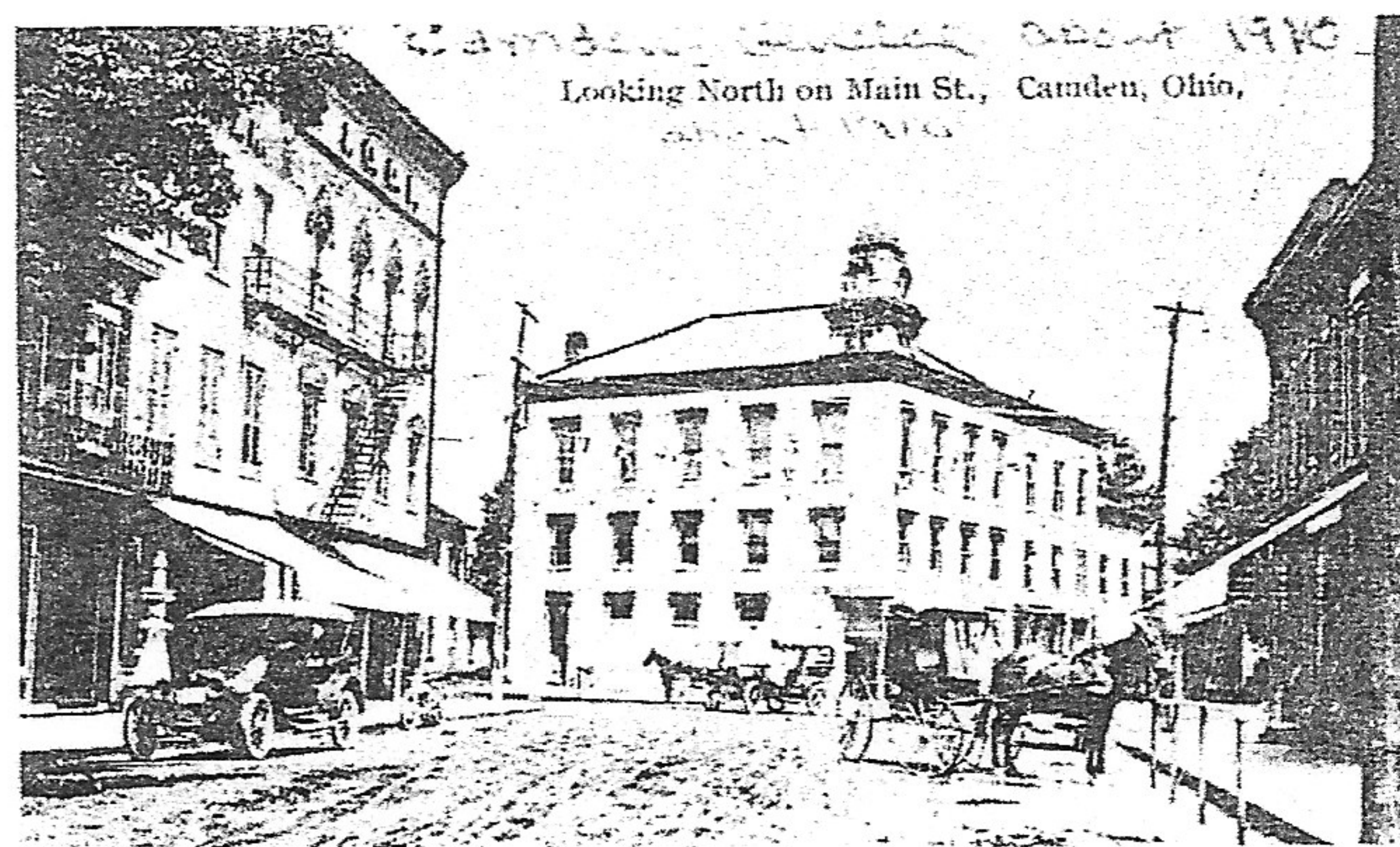


Telephone Building — 1968

Another attractive feature in the town and one that has been a great help to the citizens is the Camden Loan and Building Association which was organized in 1881. During its eighty-seven years the Camden Loan and Building Association has had only five presidents. Dr. J. S. Ferguson, the first president, continued in the same office for thirty-one years until 1912, the year of his death. He has been succeeded by Dr. G. Homsher, R. T. Acton, Thomas Donohoe, and Russell E. Ulrich. During the depression when many Loan and Building Associations closed their doors and depositors lost heavily, Camden's rode the storm without anyone losing a penny. It has not only been a safe place for saving money but has made it possible for many people to own their own homes.

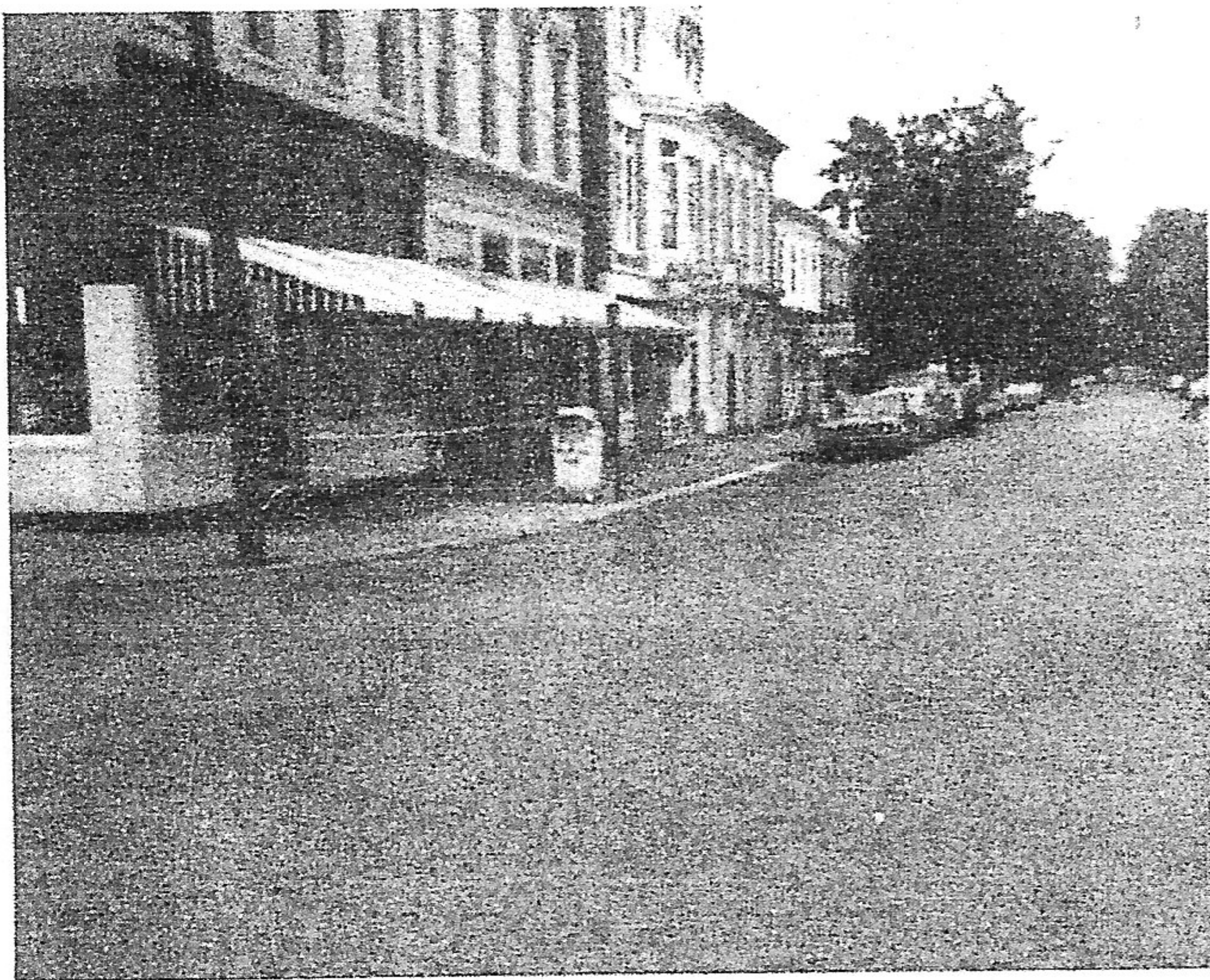
A bank is an asset to any community and Camden has been fortunate in having had a good bank for a number of years. After three years of service

the Camden Bank, a branch of Hillsboro, Ohio banking house crashed in 1893. Its failure caused financial loss to hundreds in the southern part of the county. After this failure a group of well-to-do Camden citizens signed a certificate of partnership on December 27, 1894, to transact business in Ohio under the name of The Commercial Bank. This bank was located in the same building as the First National Bank now occupies except it used only the north half of the room. The Commercial Bank proved very satisfactory but it became inadequate for a growing community so in 1906 this private institution ceased to exist. It was replaced by a First National Bank of Camden, the first and only institution of its kind in Preble County outside of Eaton. The comptroller of currency on July 6, 1906 authorized its establishment with a capital stock of \$50,000. The new bank acquired by outright purchase the fixtures of the old bank, and took over the deposits and business. The Camden First National Bank continues to grow and thrive and serve the community. During the years this bank has made one change in its name. In December 1934 the name of First National Bank of Camden was changed to the present name of First National Bank in Camden.



Looking north on Main Street — 1910

A bank seems to be a necessary institution in every town, but a newspaper is almost as indispensable. Camden depended mainly upon Eaton papers until 1877 when the first local newspaper was published on June 2. Will R. Hartpence, the editor and proprietor, published the paper under



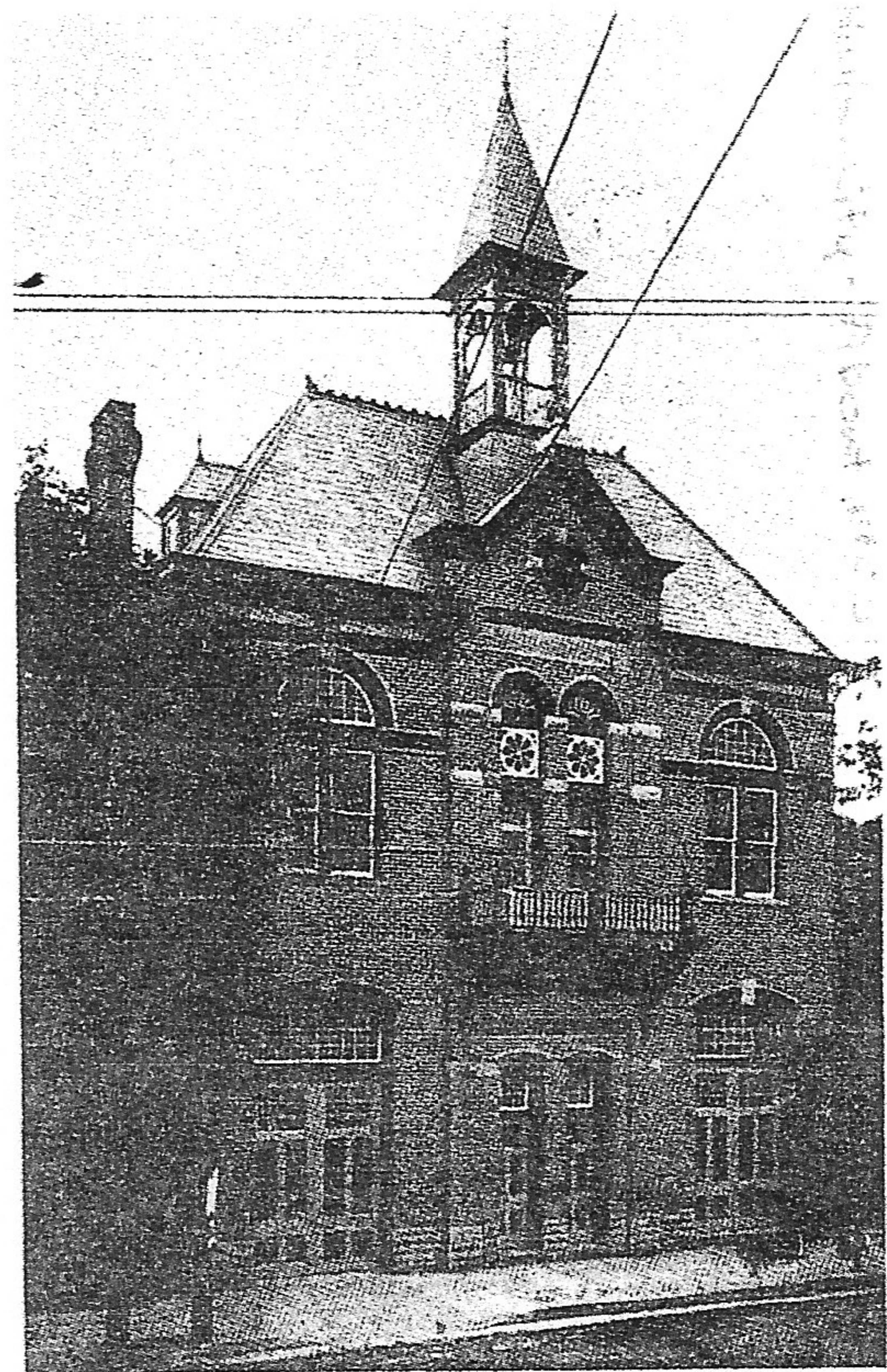
First National Bank corner — looking south on Main Street — 1968

the name *Camden Herald*. Hartpence was very outspoken and quite fearless in attacking those issues he thought were wrong. He was an especially strong advocate for temperance.

Soon after the suspended publication of *The Herald* two Camden men, E. M. and L. E. Kennedy, started the *Camden Gazette*. The first issue appeared January 15, 1880. L. E. Kennedy retired from the firm on July 10, of the same year. E. M. Kennedy continued in the business until 1884 when he sold to C. M. Haines. In 1889 William S. Fornshell and son, Marvin, became owner and publishers. The paper continued to be called the *Camden Gazette* until 1902 when it ceased publication. W. E. McChristie on April 4, 1902 issued the first *Preble County News*. Again in 1909 the paper changed owners. This time Earl H. Irwin became publisher with Ray Simpson as manager and editor. Mr. Simpson secured entire control of the *Preble County News* on May 1, 1914 by purchasing it from Irwin. This he held until 1950, the time of his death. Since that time the paper has been published by the Ray Simpson family. All the papers from the *Camden Herald* to and including the *Preble County News* have been Republican but none of the publishers or editors has been so frank and outspoken as Camden's first publisher, Will Hartpence.

Compliments of Campbell Motor Co. — Camden
B. F. Otto & H. G. Headley, D.V.M.'s — Camden

Camden's new Opera House and City Hall was completed in 1889 at a cost of fifteen thousand dollars. The opening of the new building with an opera on the night of May 11, 1889 was a notable social event in Camden. The building was the pride of Camden. Besides housing the fire department and being a meeting place for the town council, the City Hall was used as a center for all activities such as home talent entertainments, road shows, dances, and basketball games. In the late twenties the second floor of the building was condemned by the State Fire Marshal until an outside fire escape was added. Since the village had little money for such improvements the building remained closed until 1933.

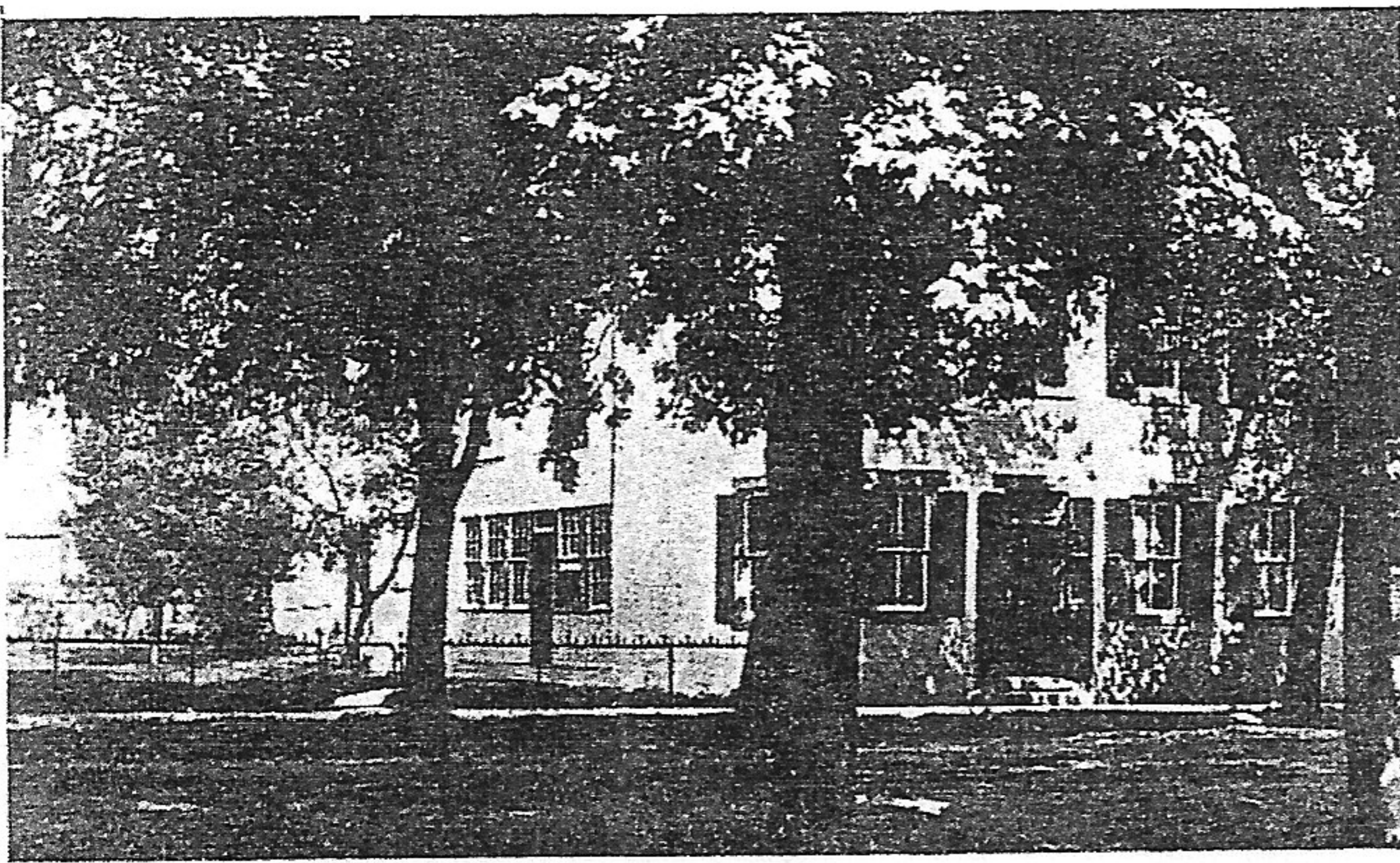


Opera House and City Hall about 1900

The previous year several young men who were without work and with very little money organized a social club, the Camden Progressive Club, and wanted to have some place to spend their time. They soon began to plan something for the better-

ment of the town. With this in mind they met with the council and made plans to remodel the City Hall to make it usable for basketball games and other recreation. The club members donated their labor, many citizens gave a little money, and the village appropriated the funds that were available. With this cooperation the old stage was torn out which increased the floor space, a new floor was laid, the interior was redecorated, a new furnace was installed and a fire escape was built. Again the Town Hall was the pride of Camden and especially proud were the boys of the Progressive Club.

One convenience the community enjoyed in Camden at an earlier time was the Camden Sanitarium, which no longer exists. The first such institution was opened in 1912 in the Arlington Hotel on South Main Street. This sanitarium was used for the treatment of rheumatism. The physicians in charge were Dr. W. E. Pryor and Dr. D. W. McQueen, who were assisted by Miss Sarah Pottenger. The sanitarium gained wide attention because of its success in numerous cases. They used the water obtained from the old gas wells which contained special medicinal value. The sanitarium had to be moved to another location when the Arlington Hotel was sold in 1913. The building south of the Presbyterian Church was purchased and remodeled into a modern general hospital by Dr. McQueen and Miss Sarah Pottenger. In 1919 this hospital was closed because of the age and health of Miss Pottenger would not permit her to continue her work.



Camden Sanitarium, N. Main St. 1915,
now Florence Burke residence.

Just two years later Camden was fortunate to have another sanitarium that opened. Mrs. Opal Fudge (now Mrs. Ed Travis) was ready on May 1, 1921 to receive patients in her small hospital which was located on North Main Street just north of the Nein Funeral Home. Hers was used primarily by Dr. McQueen for surgical cases and their recovery. Mrs. Fudge continued to operate her sanitarium until February 7, 1926 at which time she closed it because Dr. McQueen became so afflicted with muscular dystrophy that he was no longer able to operate. Today we have no sanitarium but we are fortunate to have a Rest Home on East Central Avenue.

Great improvements were made in the village during the depression of the 1930's through P.W.A. (Public Works Administration). Through the P.W.A. projects Camden constructed a municipal water works system, installed a sanitary sewage system, and put in concrete curbs and gutters on Central Avenue, Mount Auburn, and on the hills within the corporation. Before the town received the federal grant a Board of Public Affairs composed of Tom Donohoe, Dr. F. B. Jackson, and M.



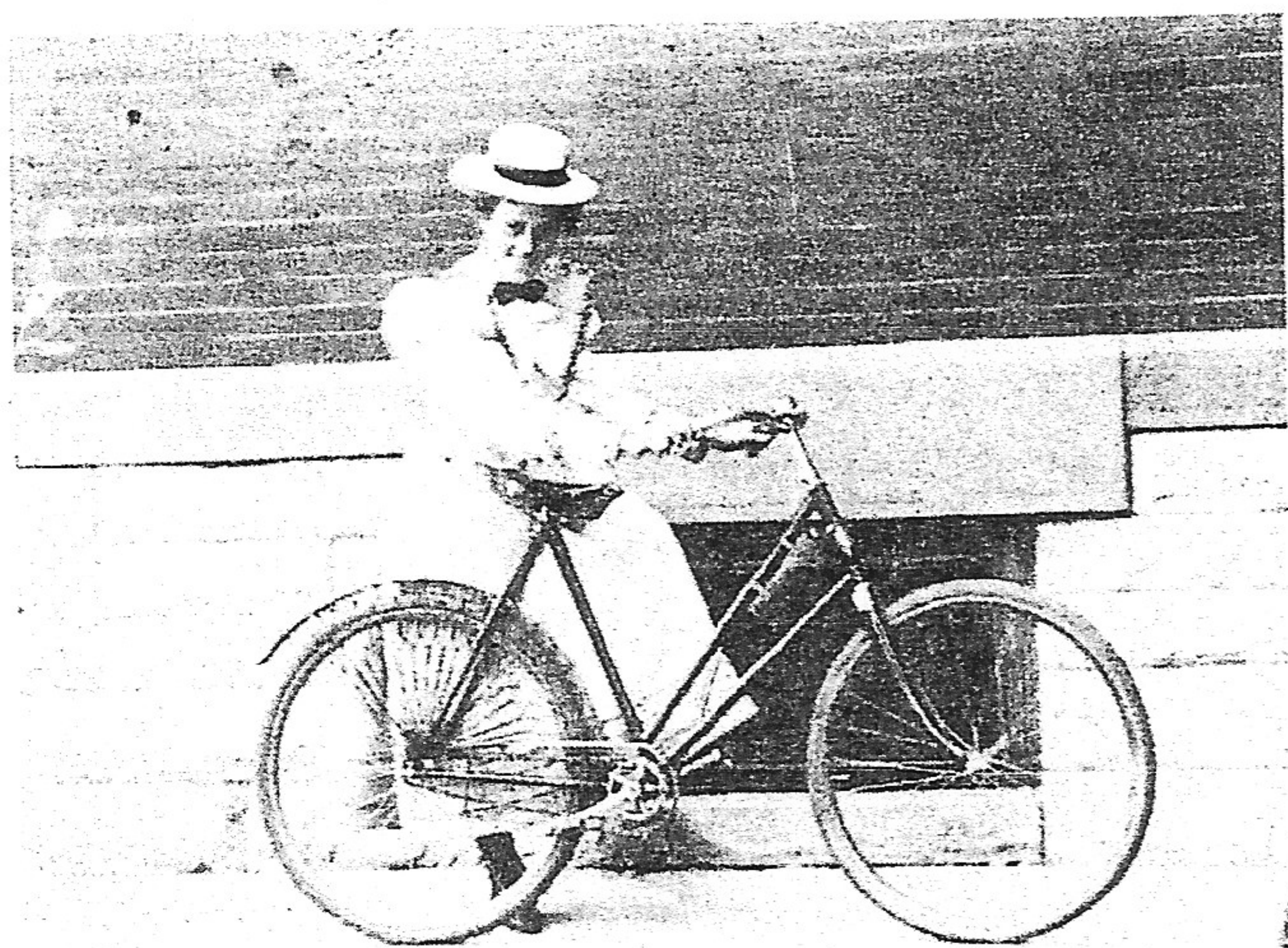
Camden Board of Public Affairs — 1968
Left to right — Jim Feix, Bob Mondello, Harry Woodward, Cecil Bailey, Waterworks Supt.

V. Bryson was appointed by Mayor Oscar Taylor. It was under their direction and the engineer, W. S. Herr of Portsmouth, Ohio, that the water system was installed.

At the same time the water system was under construction, Camden was able to secure federal aid for the installation of a sanitary sewerage sys-

tem. This improvement was also constructed under F.E.R.A. (Federal Emergency Relief Act). In Camden's projects, the corporation paid for the materials from mortgage revenue bonds, which was only approximately thirty percent of the total construction cost. The balance came as a federal relief grant.

A recent project for the improvement of the village is a municipal park in the north end of town known as the Water Works Park. This project was first started and sponsored by the Camden Lions Club in 1954. Since the park was laid out, trees have been planted, a wading pool for children has been built, a horseshoe court laid out, and a shelterhouse was completed in September 1961.



Recreation — 1895 — Leone Wall

If James Moore, James Black, and Isaac Sutton could return to Camden to see the village one hundred and fifty years after it had been laid out, they could see that the population has not grown tremendously in number, but the townspeople have practically all the advantages and conveniences of their neighbors in larger towns and cities.

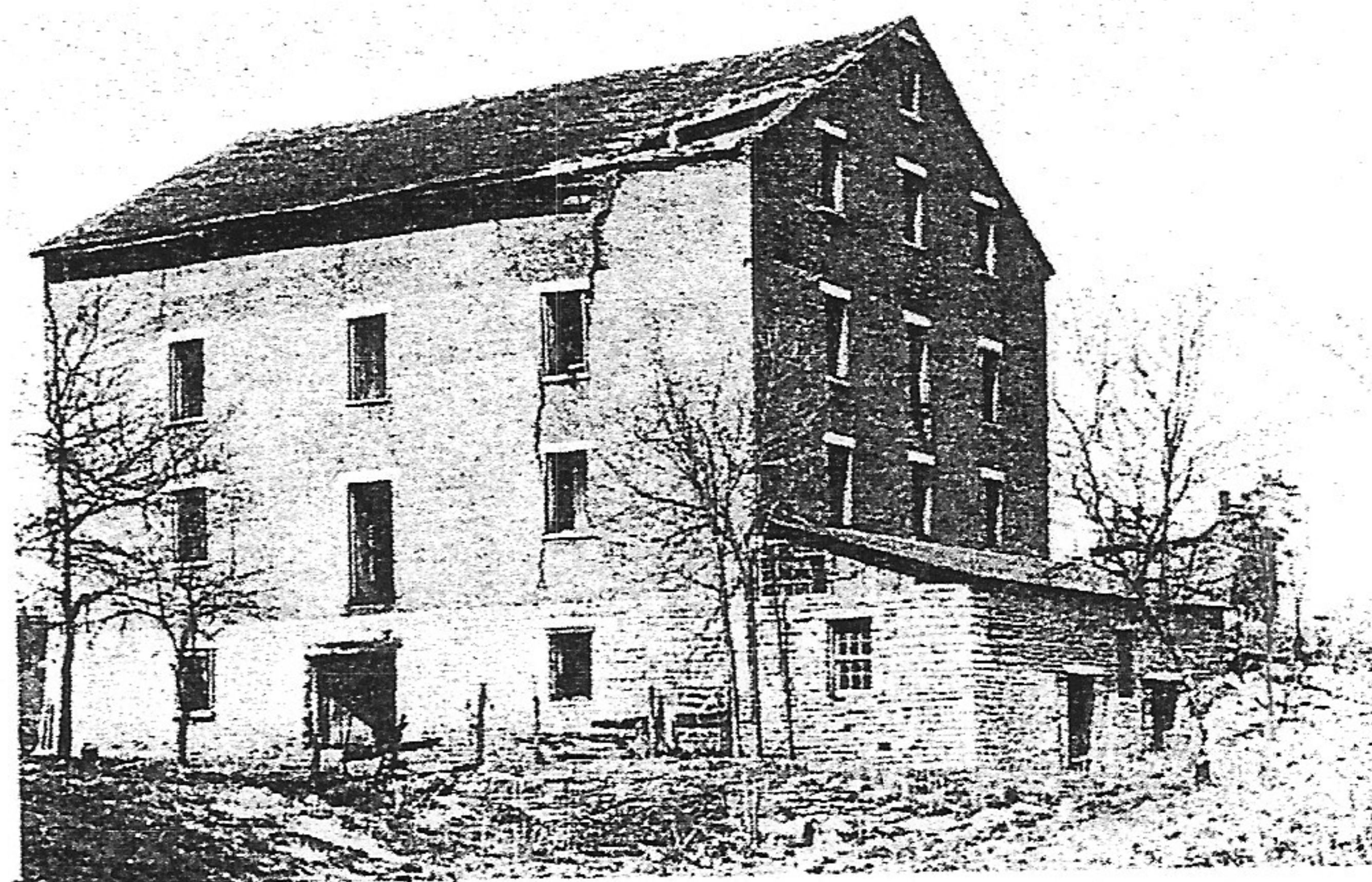
THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF CAMDEN

The village (Dover, Newcomb, then Camden) has always catered to the economic needs and necessities of a rural community. In the early years of the town many of the industries were dependent

upon the agricultural products of the soil. Later, when the vast supply of gravel near the town was recognized, several new industries sprung up which proved to be the backbone of Camden's industrial life.

As early as 1810 or 1812 John Stubbs, Sr. had a carding machine located along the Seven Mile Creek south of what later became Camden, in connection with his sawmill. Until 1832 he did a great deal of work there. At a later date, carding was carried on with horsepower in Camden by Samuel Cornwell. Still later, from 1840-1850, the same business was conducted on Main Street by John and Amos Mills. From 1854-1860, Mr. Samuel Hibbard had such an establishment. As early as 1847, Mr. Hibbard also had a woolen factory in the village.

Gristmills were more widely distributed than any other type of pioneer manufacturing. These mills meant better food and more money to the community where they were located. The first gristmill in Somers Township was built by William Irwin in 1808 about a mile north of Camden on the east side of Seven Mile Creek. This was in operation until 1825 when Matthew McClung erected a second one on the same site. David Barnett bought and finished the mill in 1835. After running the mill for a number of years he abandoned it and in 1850 constructed a three-story brick building very close to the one started by McClung. It was provided with fire runs of the best buhrs. This mill served the community until



Barnett's Mill — Built in 1850

Compliments of Harris Metal Works — Camden