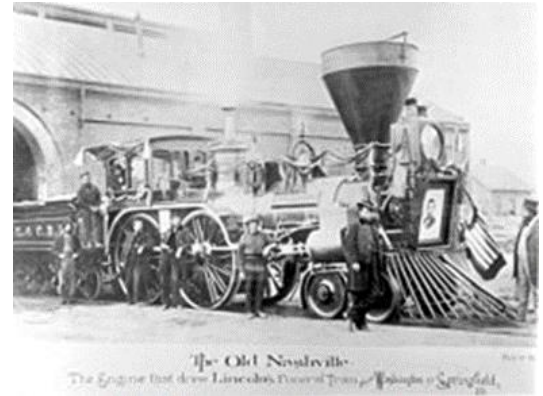


Ashland's Rich History

The Northern Central Railroad (NCR) was originally called the Baltimore & Susquehanna Railroad. The railroad began to be built in 1832, running between Baltimore and Sudbury, Pennsylvania. It was one of the oldest rail lines in the country. The railway serviced the growing Baltimore, York and Harrisburg industries. The NCR operated for 134 years, from 1838 to 1972, carrying both passengers and freight. It had 46 stops, 22 of which were in Maryland. In 1880 records show the following items being transported on the Northern Central Railroad: coal, flour, grain, livestock, lime, pig iron, butter, lard and lumber. During the Civil War, the Pennsylvania Railroad-controlled Northern Central served as a major transportation route for supplies, food, and clothing, as well as transportation for troops heading to the South from Camp Curtin and other Northern military training stations. The NCR trail, built on the railroad bed, and starting in Ashland, opened to the public in 1984 and is a treasured resource of community members.

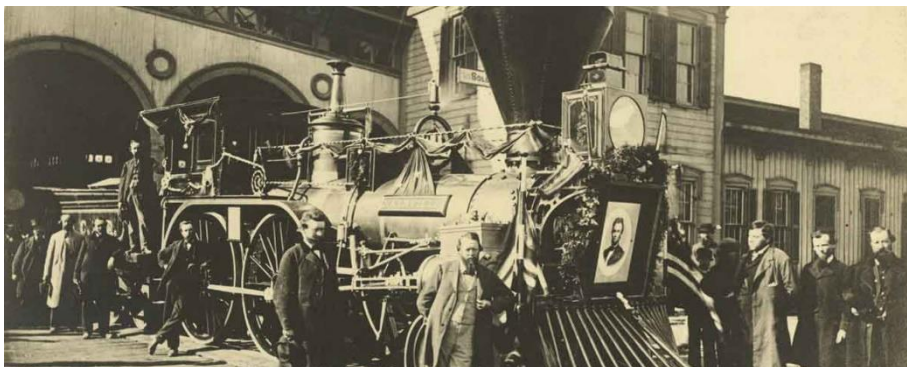
At one point Ashland Iron Works was the 3rd largest producer of pig iron in the country (pig iron was the raw material used to make steel), employing 250 people who lived in the settlement around the foundry and filling 200 railroad cars per week on the rail line that is now our beloved NCR trail.

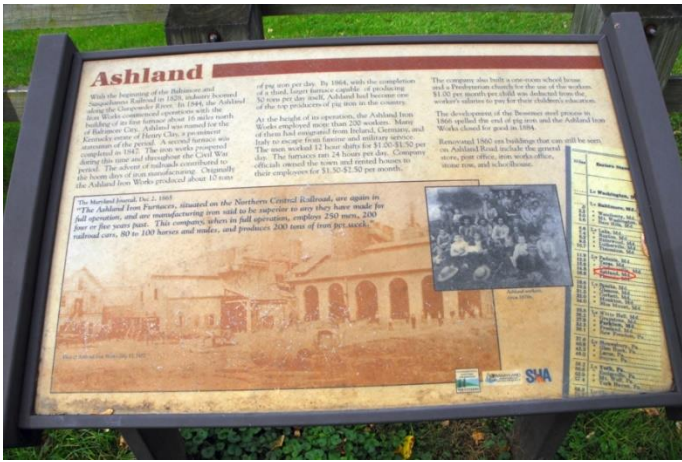


President Abraham Lincoln traveled on the Northern Central Railroad line through Ashland in 1863 on his way to deliver the Gettysburg Address and the route through Ashland also carried the funeral trains of four presidents: Harrison (1841), Taylor (1850), Lincoln (1865) and Harding (1923).

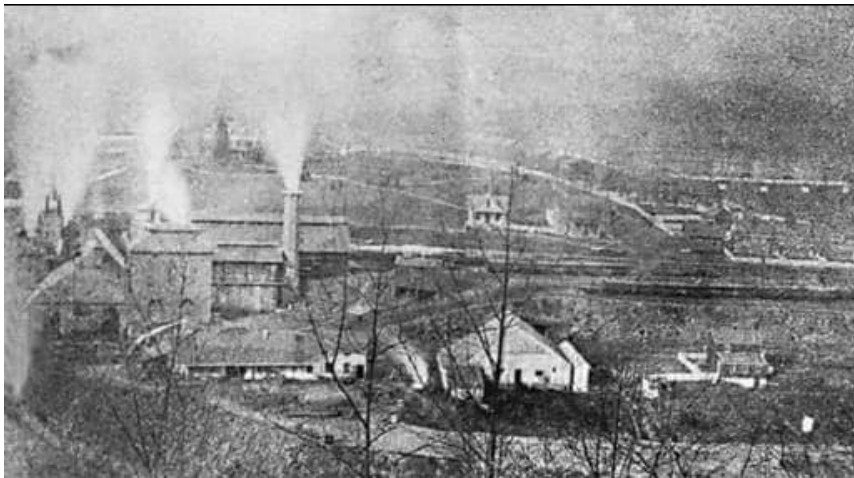
In 1928 when the Baltimore & Susquehanna Railroad was established, industry was booming along the Gunpowder River. In 1844, the Ashland Iron Works began building its first furnace. Ashland was named for Henry Clay's Kentucky estate. Clay was our country's ninth Secretary of State and served under John Quincy Adams.

The railroads were critical to the iron manufacturing boom. In its early days, the Ashland Iron Works produced about 10 tons of pig iron per day. In 1854 the Iron Works built a third, larger furnace that was capable of producing 50 tons of pig iron a day.





Remains of the Ashland Iron Works are still visible in the woods behind Ashland today.



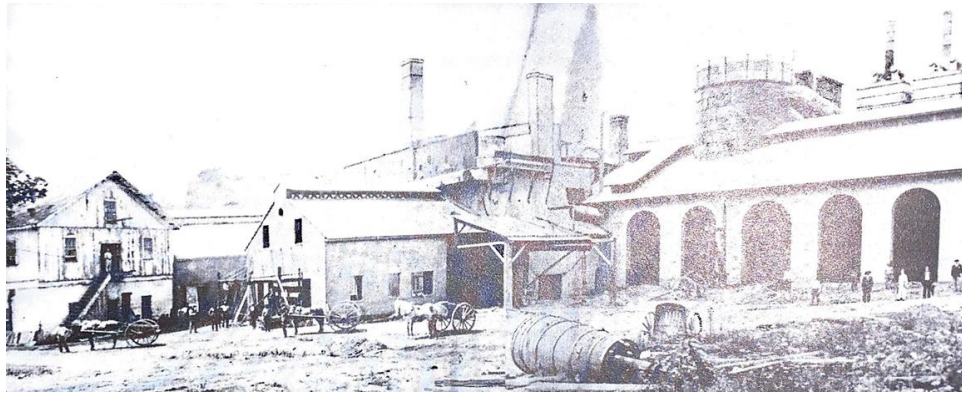
Pig Iron was obtained by smelting iron ore in a blast furnace. The traditional shape of the molds used was a branching structure formed in sand, with many individual ingots at right angles to a central channel or "runner". The shape resembled a litter of piglets being nursed by a sow. After the metal cooled and hardened, the smaller ingots (the "pigs") were broken off from the runner (the "sow"), hence the name "pig iron".

What is Pig Iron?

Pig iron, also known as crude iron, is an intermediate product of the iron industry in the production of steel. It is produced when iron ore is smelted with a fuel containing high carbon, such as coke. This is usually done with limestone to act as the flux. The lime kiln can still be seen a short walk up the trail. The Lime Kiln was built into a hillside for support. A fire was maintained at the bottom of the pit and crude lime was thrown on top of it. The heat from the fire would separate the pure powder form of the lime from the other rocks and minerals. Lime was also used to white-wash buildings, as a disinfectant, and poured over dead bodies to slow decay.



The development of the Bessemer steel process allowed steel to be produced at a lower cost, eventually bringing an end to the need for pig iron and leading to the closure of the Ashland Iron Works. Experimentation leading to the development of the Bessemer process began as early as 1847. Ashland Iron Works closed for good in 1884.



The goal of the Bessmer Steel Process was to develop new ways to remove impurities from pig iron using blasts of air. It was theorized that by injecting air into molten iron, impurities could be removed. This new process meant that steel ingots could be produced much more efficiently resulting in a way to mass-produce stee. This led to the end of the need for pig iron.

During the height of operations, the Ashland Iron Works built a Presbyterian church for its workers and their families. The church is still an active place of worship, just across Paper Mill Road from the Ashland neighborhood.





To serve the children of the workers' families, the company built a one-room schoolhouse in 1874. The schoolhouse is now a home, standing as a showpiece at the entrance of our community. When the Iron Works was operating, one dollar a month, per child was deducted from workers' pay to cover the cost of their children's education.



47. Pupils at school #7, District 8 (Ashland) before the First World War. In the period 1909-1915, the teachers in the solid stone building were: S. Cora Haile, Edith M. Carl, and Ella T. Connor. There were only two teachers at a time.



The Ashland Schoolhouse re-imagined as a home, today

From 1924 – 1984, Mano Swartz owned the property that is now Ashland. In his early 20's, Swartz was a Hungarian forest ranger who was destined for a life of military service under the government regime of the time. Wanting to escape this life, Swartz fled to America, drawn by the gold rush of the 1880s. Like many Jewish immigrants, he ended up in New York learning the fur trade. Family legend has it that at one point, Swartz did go to Colorado to get in on the gold rush. There he established a "dance hall" (i.e. brothel) to entertain the miners. He planned a bull fight as a money-making idea, but the evening before the big event, the animal escaped, so Swartz, who had already collected money for bets on the fight, fled back to New York where he continued to work in the fur coat business. He married the sister of the Saks brothers (of Saks Fifth Avenue) and in 1889 established a fur store in downtown Baltimore. In 1924, he bought the whole 34-acre former foundry village of Ashland for \$43,000. He lived on the property in the center of Ashland that still serves as a home, with a stone house and barn. In purchasing Ashland, Swartz became the owner of 24 dwellings and landlord to 125 'villagers'. When Baltimore County told Swartz that he could no longer rent homes that didn't have indoor plumbing, he sold Ashland to developer Kimberly Strutt in 1984. Mano Swartz died in 2009. He and his wife are buried on the property that they owned in the center of Ashland.





Workers' housing in the 1960s or 70s, along what is now the NCR Trail, now converted to 4 townhomes



Painting of Ashland before the changes made in the late seventies, artist unknown



Houses being built and re-built in the late 1980s





Renovated 1860s era buildings that were the general store, post office, stone row workers' dormitories, the iron works office, managers' dwellings, and the schoolhouse are now homes in our neighborhood and the ruins of the 3 massive foundries are still visible in the woods nearby.





The original plan for the re-built Ashland community



The Maryland Journal, Dec 2, 1865:

The Ashland Iron Furnaces, situated on the Northern Central Railroad, are again in full operation, and are manufacturing iron said to be superior to any they have made for four or five years past. This company, when in full operation, employs 250 men, 200 railroad cars, 80 to 100 horses and mules, and produces 200 tons of iron per week."

Baltimore Sun, April 24, 1991: Brought low by privies, ironworks town of Ashland re-emerges as luxury village; *Robert A. Erlandson*

Virgie Gover moved to Ashland as a 10-year-old and left 47 years later, after raising five children in the tiny village along Western Run in Cockeysville. And during all that time, her family never had an indoor toilet. "That didn't matter. It was a great place to live," said Mrs. Gover, 64, who still misses the old days in the close-knit community. Ironically, it was the proliferation of privies that led to the demise of this 19th-century village and its resurrection as what one historian calls "the best preserved ironworks town in Baltimore County." Ashland's outhouses were polluting Loch Raven Reservoir so badly that by the late 1970s authorities had issued an ultimatum to the Mano Swartz family, which had owned the village since 1924: Install municipal sewerage or demolish the place.

"It was so costly that it didn't make sense," said Mr. Swartz, the Towson furrier, who went as far as to draft a plan that included rehabilitating most of the old homes. Instead, the Swartz family, which bought Ashland from the city of Baltimore at an auction for \$43,000, opted to sell. Developer Kimberly Strutt bought the 34-acre village in 1984 and found himself facing a tough decision. Time had taken its toll; it would have been easier -- and less expensive -- to bulldoze the dilapidated old houses and start fresh. But when he considered Ashland's history, Mr. Strutt decided to save as many buildings as possible and make them the centerpiece of a new luxury development nestled in a bend of Western Run. In the end, he razed about 20 old buildings, mostly unsalvageable frame houses, "and about 30 or 40 privies."

He saved 11 of the most important buildings, some dating to the 1840s when Ashland's iron furnace was built. Among them were the two-story brick houses of ironworks managers, the old company store, post office and school. Most were stripped to their brick and stone shells and rebuilt. "It was a labor of love," Mr. Strutt said. It turned out to be the right economic choice, too. Mr. Strutt says restoring the old buildings has made Ashland a more desirable neighborhood, increasing the value of the new homes he's built. The new houses, both detached homes and town houses, were designed to take advantage of the town's past. Covered with gray-painted cedar shakes or mellowed red brick with white trim, they are plain on the outside in keeping with Ashland's working-class history.

"It's a good compromise," said county historian John W. McGrain, who included Ashland in his industrial history of Baltimore County, "From Pig Iron to Cotton Duck." Normally a purist on preservation, he calls the result "immensely preferable to destruction." The Ashland Iron Works was begun in 1844 and was named for the Kentucky estate of Henry Clay, then one of the country's most famous statesmen. The furnace produced its first iron two years later.

The works prospered during the Civil War and by 1867 had three furnaces and more than 200 workers. Development of the Bessemer steel process in 1866 spelled the end of pig iron, and Ashland closed in 1884. The furnace ruins remain in the woods beyond the old Northern Central Railway tracks. After the iron industry shifted to Sparrows Point in the 1880s, Ashland remained a country village. "It sat still for nearly a hundred years," Mr. Strutt said.

The town's transformation has been "astounding," said the Rev. Fred Stashkevetch Jr., pastor of the Ashland Presbyterian Church, which has stood at the edge of the village since 1874. "It came from what could have been the wrong side of the tracks to an upscale community," he said, referring to Ashland's slow decline to near-destruction after the works closed down.

Ashland's signature restoration is the block of sparkling white-painted brick and limestone houses called Stone Row. Once eight four-room workers' cottages, Stone Row retains its 19th-century charm but has been transformed into four luxurious homes beside the stream at the beginning of the hike-and-bike trail along the old Northern Central Railroad line. Mrs. Gover said she was paying \$37.50 monthly rent for her Stone Row house when she left in 1984. She can scarcely believe the same two-story house -- now restored -- can command a price above \$200,000. Brenda Beall, 39, of Monkton, one of her daughters, was born on Stone Row and recalls it fondly -- even though the family had to use an outhouse and for much of her childhood drew its water from a pump at the end of the street.

1866 Letter from William Keesey, an Ashland Ironworks Worker

Maryland
ASHLAND. Station. Baltimore co
May 31st 1866

I this evening take my pen
in hand to write to you all
to informe you that we arived
here safe and got into a
job of work right away. we
like the place well But the
work is of the hardest kind
we are working in the
firey Furnace. Old Daniel
was put unto a firey furnace
and got safe out again.

We get splendid Boarding
but we have to pay dear
for it. 17 dollars a month
a man hasent got much
left after all. this is a lively
place full of Irish Lassies
and Laddies, Patricks & Dollies

Adam Siechrist lives at
corner of front street one
and daniel goes there every
evening. Daniel plays on
his fife and all the Irish
girls gather in front of
the door to hear the music
I will give you a small sketch
of our travel down here from
daniel's house we left in the
morning and missed the
eight o'clock train then we was
going to take the eleven o'clock
train, than that train would
not stop at Ashland, so we
went back to Shrewsbury and
down the Pike and got our
dinner at Nathan Meads, and
went down the pike to Parkton
and waited on the 4 o'clock train
and that would not stop at
ashland, so we walked down the
the Rail Road to White Hall

and there we got on the eight
o'clock evening train, and
arrived at Ashland and slept
in the Engine House that
night and commenced to work
the next afternoon.

Let me know whether that
watch come yet or not yet
I have a notion of going to
Lancaster co. yet, on the 15
of June we get part off.

Lifting this heavy pick Iron is
too hard work for a white man
every few days there is some
killed on the rail road down
here a few days ago a man
got killed right here at the Rail
road his remains was scadred
two hundred feet along the ties
answer soon

direct to W.^m H. Vessey
Cockeysville P.O.
Baltimore Co Md
Ashland Station



Letter

Mr Joel Meesey
Cross Roads P O
York Co
Pennat