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THE BUXTON SOUVENIR NUMBER.

History of Buxton and Her Industrious People.

A Brief History of This Thriving Mining Town--Her People, Her Society and Her Business.

The Iowa State Bystander deems it a pleasure at this particular time to be permitted to give our many readers, especially those in the middle west, a brief synopsis, a glimpse, we may say, of this unique town known as the king of Iowa mining towns. This town of Buxton is beautifully located upon a high level plateau from whence it can be seen for many miles around. The streets are laid out due north and south and most of the houses are five to six rooms, one and one-half stories, neatly built and nicely painted, of a dark drab slate color, with well kept yards decked in the summer with flowers and vines. Occasionally you will see a house that is owned or built by the individual. Then they are painted a white or some other color. Here dwells about 6,000 people, of which nine-tenths are colored people and the other one-tenth are white. There are two reasons that we are glad to print this special number. 1st. That the Bystander more than two years ago got out a Buxton souvenir number and predicted great things to this then newly organized town. 2nd. That we can refute the impression recently gone out from this town that it is a bad town and class of people were not good citizens. We hope in this issue we will be able to show the public otherwise. Those who read this article will go to the map, or consult an atlas, or get the 1900 census report on the population of Buxton. We will say that you will not find it marked on the map at all unless the map is less than four years old. Six years ago the ground where the beautiful town is located was a wild prairie or a lonesome farm land, where the rabbit and the squirrel, or the wild turkey and prairie chicken held sway. This town made its rapid growth by the Consolidation Coal company moving bodily nearly all of Muchakinock, once a thriving mining camp, over to the town site of Buxton, leaving Muchy like a deserted village miles to the northeast. The Consolidation Coal Company, which is operated along the Chicago & Northwestern railway line, was organized more than twenty-seven years ago by J. E. Buxton, a native of Vermont. Mr. J. E. Buxton came west and opened up the Muchakinock Consolidated Coal Company and several others with white miners. After a few years' operation the white miners struck and after several attempts to have the white miners live up to their agreement it was decided to replace them with colored miners. This was about twenty-two years ago, and since that time the colored miners have always been in the majority and there has never occurred any more strikes or labor troubles and the Consolidated Coal Company has grown until now it is the largest coal company in Iowa.

This great coal company is now managed and operated by Mr. B. C. Buxton, only son of Mr. J. E. Buxton, who is general superintendent, who laid out and named the town Buxton in honor of his father.

The general superintendent of the Consolidation Coal Company designed and superintended the laying out of the town, the plans and construction of the buildings and location and equipment of the mines, the water supply, the drainage and all the many interesting details in the development of what is unquestionably the model mining camp in Iowa, and perhaps the United States, for the Consolidation Coal Company owns in fee simple all the land in Monroe county on which the town is built. Too much praise cannot be given to this company for raising the life, tone and building for the miner where he and his family can at least have some of the home comforts. Then another thing the Consolidation Coal Company will lease any miner a lot or several acres of ground and he can build any kind of a house he may desire. Some 40 or 50 families, both white and colored, have done this, and today some of the houses are beautiful from an architectural standpoint and modern in arrangement on the interior, which shows the fine taste and high moral tone of the inhabitants. Another noteworthy feature is that not a saloon is permitted on the company's ground, nor is there any whisky sold on his ground.

This town, although large enough to be incorporated, will never be unless the company gives its consent, as all the lots are owned by the company and are private property.

The Company.

The Consolidation Coal Company is one of the largest companies operating in this state. They probably own and control more coal land than any company in the state. At present they are employing 2,000 men, not including boys. Their daily output has now reached the enormous amount of 4,000 tons of screened lump per day, and the end is not yet.

The following are the officers and clerks located at Buxton, and who have office room in their fine building: B C. Buxton, general superintendent; N P. Herrington, general cashier; in the operating department, Wm. Calvert, general foreman; Geo. W. Chambers, foreman at No. 10; Thos. Calvert, foreman at No. 11; James Calvert, foreman at No. 12; R. C. McCleary, foreman at No. 13; W. W. Lee, foreman at No. 14; No. 14 is sunk but not in operation; the entrance is dug to the extreme limits and commence mining from the extreme end and work to the shaft. This is claimed to be the latest and best way to mine. F. L. Wilkins, master mechanic; E. R. Jorgensen, mining engineer, and J. G. Wiley, assistant; L. A. Davidson, storekeeper. Office force : Eric F. Brown, assistant cashier; G. H. Child, chief clerk; M. L. Crowder, Raymond Wilson, James Paris and Mayme Long, clerks; Miss Sarah J. Tennant, private secretary to Mr. B. C. Buxton, the general superintendent.

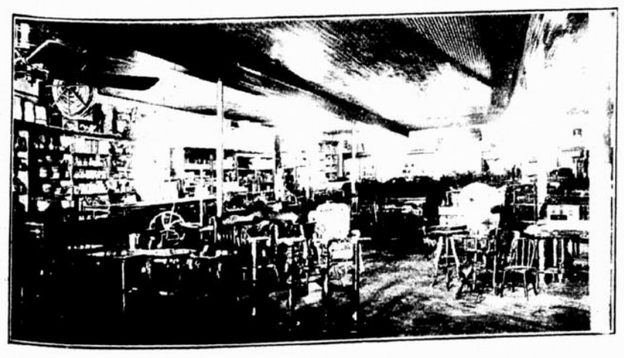
The men are paid regularly twice a month in cash over the counter. This is a great sight to see nearly 2,000 men and a few women standing in line for hours receiving their pay in gold and silver, some drawing, after their expenses are taken out, as high as $25, $50 and $75 for each two weeks' pay. Oh, miner, where is your money? And what are you investing it in?

In addition to this general store the Neely Bros., colored, run a nice, well kept grocery and dry goods store. They are gentlemanly and good business young men. Mr. H. A. Armstrong runs the largest meat shop. John Baxter manages the meat shop; has been in that business more than fifteen years. He is one of those men who knows the value of a dollar. Anderson Perkins is a successful business man. He owns the only hotel and confectionery store, which is managed by his oldest son, Lewis. There are four drug stores. B. F. Cooper and W. J. Waters are colored. The other two white, the Thomas Drug Co. and Williams drug store. There are five restaurants. The Jefferies Bros. have two good restaurants. They are doing nicely. D. T. Thompson has been in the restaurant business longer than any one in Buxton and is doing well. The Williams restaurant seems to be doing business. The London Bros. opened a millinery and music store. They also do insurance business. They are accommodating men. Mr. Jas. Roberts is a cigarmaker, in fact the only colored cigarmaker in Iowa. The Big 4 and Iowa Boy are his leading brands. Mr. Howard has a tailor shop, while Mr. Callaway solicits clothing to be made for the Murphy Bros. house in Chicago, Ill.

Y. M. C. A. Building.

This is the largest building in the town and has done more in civilizing and uplifting the masses from ignorance to a healthy, vigorous body and better morals. Indeed it is this Christian training that has made Buxton stand out superior to all other mining camps in the United States. We have said so much about this building and its efficient secretary elsewhere we will not say more here.

Soda Fountain and Drugs—Second Floor.



Furniture and Gents Furnishings—Second Floor.

Two years ago the Bystander published a special Buxton edition and the editor was personally through the store. Mr. R. R. MacRae had taken the management of this enterprise but a few months previously and had but begun on a systematic renovating and remodeling of the conditions then prevailing. Every department received his personal attention, each in its turn, and now Mr. MacRae can be said to manage one of the best equipped, most systematic and thoroughly modern general merchandise stores in the middle west.

The wants of the people are catered to as in no other camp in Iowa. Mr. E. M. Hammond, as purchasing agent, is constantly in the field, buying exclusively for this store, with headquarters at 1111 Masonic Temple, Chicago. Goods must be bought right and the right kind of goods bought in order to make any business a complete success and Mr. Hammond has made good. He keeps the store stocked with the latest styles and fads from the great market centers of the United States. Every three months a trip to New York is made to select seasonable merchandise. Philadelphia, St. Louis and other large manufacturing centers are regularly visited for the purpose of selecting merchandise at the factory, not waiting until it is put in the hands of the jobber or middle man and get the "leavins." In this manner the stock is always clean, fresh and up-to-date. This fact alone brings many customers from towns of larger populations within a radius of thirty miles to make selections such as could not be supplied by their home merchants.

This store besides looking after the needs of Buxton's 5,000 people is tributary to a large area of country and small towns. Farmers for fifteen miles outside of Buxton are regular customers And why? They are paid more for their produce. They get better prices. They have a larger and better variety from which to choose. They receive courteous treatment.

The lines handled are large and varied. From "cradle to the grave"—everything a person could need or desire. Rattle baskets and nursing bottles may be found in the drug department. A little further back and down a flight of stairs are the undertaking parlors, where a licensed and experienced undertaker with his assistant can perform the last rites. Following are a few of the lines handled: Groceries, dry goods, shoes, hardware, tinware, confectionery, cigars and tobacco, clothing and gents furnishings, millinery and ladies' suits, chinaware, music and instruments, lumber, brick, sand, stone, lime, cement, plaster, etc.

Over 60,000 feet of floor space is covered with stock. Half of this is in the store, the balance in warehouses. One warehouse 40x175 is of stone, steel frame, tile roof, in five separate fireproof compartments. The oil houses are of same construction. All oils, coal oil, miners' oil, turpentine, boiled oil, raw oil and gasoline are pumped into the building, as they are sold, by means of Bowser long distance self-measuring oil pumps. This fact greatly eliminates danger of fire and is the only systematic method of handling oil. That portion of the store, usually dirty, is as clean as any other. The store puts up about 3,000 tons of ice each year and two ice wagons convey same to consumers throughout the summer.

The interior of the store is brilliantly lighted with arch and incandescent electric lights. Show cases are of heavy French plate glass. All electric lighted. The shelving is all of quarter-sawed oak and up-to-date. The Warren hardware cabinets adorn the hardware department. The accompanying cuts will but give a faint conception of the real store. It would seem that one of Chicago department stores was removed to this new colored mining camp. Twenty-one automatic "girlless" telephones have been installed for the dispatch of business, greatly used for ascertaining credits of customers at the main office. These phones also connect with the mines, office and principal buildings in the town. One of the most impressive types of the progressiveness of the store is the new automatic pneumatic cash system of sixteen stations or terminals. This has superseded the old overhead wire system used by the store previous to the installation of this modern system for the transfer of cash and charges.

The refined and cleanly appearance of the employes is extremely noticeable. In order to work in this store one must bring along his credentials and have a good record. The cigarette smoker can find no place here. If an employe is subject to strong drink or ever gets under its influence he is discharged. Clerks are required to respect themselves as well as their customers. Carelessness is not tolerated by Manager MacRae. He claims he has worked hard to make this a metropolitan store and he aims to keep it in that class. How well he has succeeded needs only a visit on the part of a stranger; for those who have been there—well, all marvel that such a store does really exist in Iowa.

The store is divided into departments, each department having its own manager, and conducting its business as if it were a separate store. Everything runs like clock work, even on the busiest days when two or three hundred people are crowding the store from morning till night. System prevails everywhere. One is conscious of an unseen power which keeps all the machinery in motion, all in unison. Things do not happen that way, yet when one asks of the manager how he can ever look after such a business and keep such order he carelessly replies: "Things run themselves here."

Many of the employes are colored, perhaps fifteen out of seventy. Mr. MacRae is always glad to get competent colored help, but there are too few of our people who realize the importance of preparation or education for such work. A refined, well educated Negro has always been in demand by this company.

Following is a list of employes of the Monroe Mercantile Company at the present time:

Manager—R. R. MacRae.
Assistant—R. D. Buckingham.
Purchasing agent—E. M. Hammond.
Office force—E. T. Christie, Carrie Pidgeon, Emily Cameron, Mrs. T. Cole, Bertha Herbig, Mrs, Templeton. Mrs. A. Watkins, Carrie Miller, Maude Watkins.
Clerks—C. E. Cliff, F. A. Kent, S. C. Welch, Albert Peterson, Henry Johnson, A. R. Jackson (colored), Lee Craddock (colored), J. W. Morrison, Judith Cruise, Mart Welch, L. C. Garlick, E. C. Strong (colored), Frank Hyatt, June Pidgeon, Edith Moore, Tom Coles, E. R. Easham, Eva Pidgeon, A. M. Leyes, Glesner Douglas (colored), F H. Reiplinger, O. K. Robinson, Ethel Moore, Ross Welcher, J. L. Roose, Wm. Lewis (colored), Hilva Troselins, Ethel Hicks, Lee Andrews, Roy Erb, Odesse Logan (colored), C. A. Nickell, Lillie Stewart (colored), Anna Brown (colored), Earl Pierce, T. H. Rouse, Jessie Nickell, Talamdge Carey (colored), D. W. Welcher, Peter Reeves (colored), Chas. Nevins, Adam Adams.

Teamster force—James T. Glen, G. D. Johnson, Harry Calvert, John Elder, Jessie Neil, James Barnett, A. L. Norton, Waldo Mitchell.

There are two articles one cannot purchase at this store, revolvers and alcoholic patent medicines, the kind in which the alcohol is so prevalent that it becomes a cheap grade of whisky. The sale of a certain patent medicine was withdrawn when a miner was found drunk with two bottles (empty) at his side.

The store at night, after the miners have eaten supper, is one large auditorium, where they gather to trade, smoke and talk. No comment is made on loafing—it is far better to have them thus passing their time than in saloons just outside the town. But they are orderly.. Boisterous or blasphemous language is not permitted about the store and Mr. MacRae tells us that during his management of three years he has had cause only once to have a drunkard removed from the building. No disturbance ever has disturbed the usual good order of this institution. It is indeed a boon to the town and the miner's friend always.

Ice Cream Parlors.

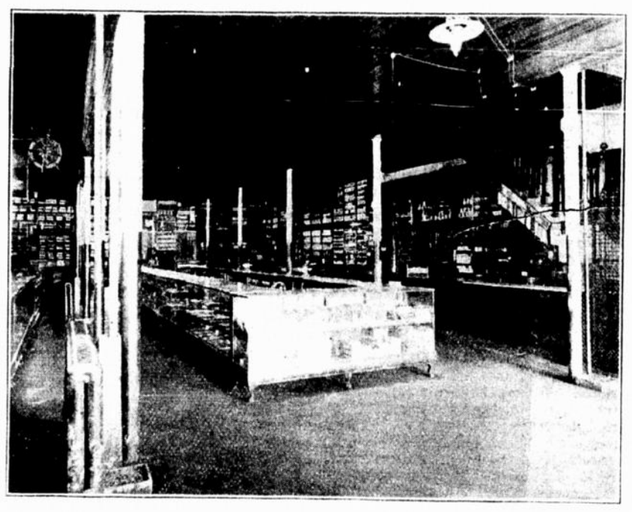
A twenty-two syrup soda fountain has been installed, with a number of tables. In the winter hot drinks and light eatables are served. Every drink known to the experienced soda dispenser is served, also ice cream. The company has its own ice cream factory, the freezer and ice crusher being run by electric motors. Capacity of the factory is 40 gallons per hour.

Throughout the store quality reigns. The following brands of goods are familiar to the buying public: Peters and Red Cross shoes, Stetson hats, Knox and Dunlap styles, Cluett coat shirts, Kuppenheimer suits, Heinz bottle goods, Snyder's catsup, Ferndell & Richelieu brands canned goods, Premium hams and bacon, Armour's canned meats and many others too numerous to mention on this page.

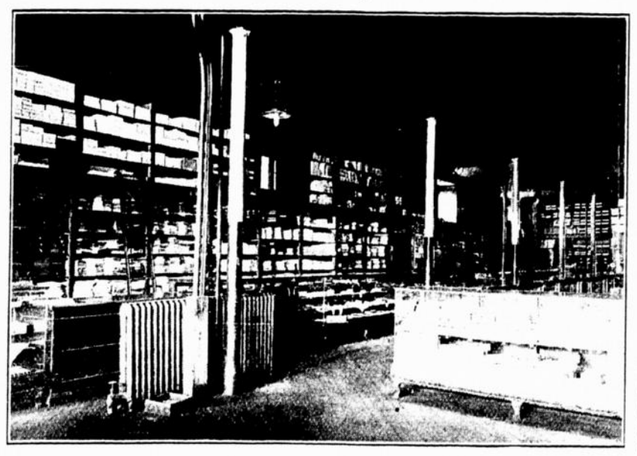
The store has eight large delivery wagons, owns its own hearse, landau and carriages. Full charge is taken of funerals even to the preaching of the burial sermon, if necessary. Mr. Sam Welch, as undertaker and funeral director, has been with the company a number of years and he fully understands his work.

Prices are extremely moderate, comparing favorably with any of our Des Moines stores—in fact many articles before the public. We often wish there were more of such monopolies scattered throughout the United States.

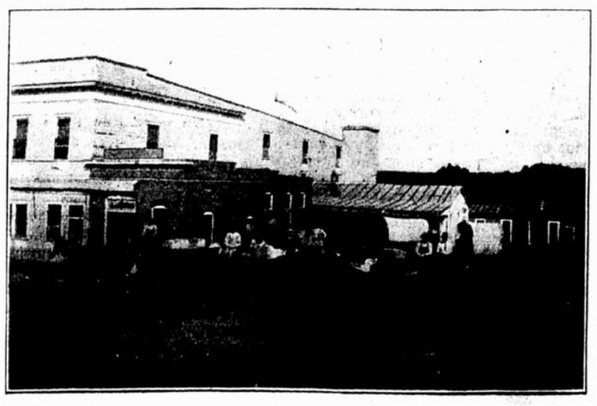
Continued on page 5



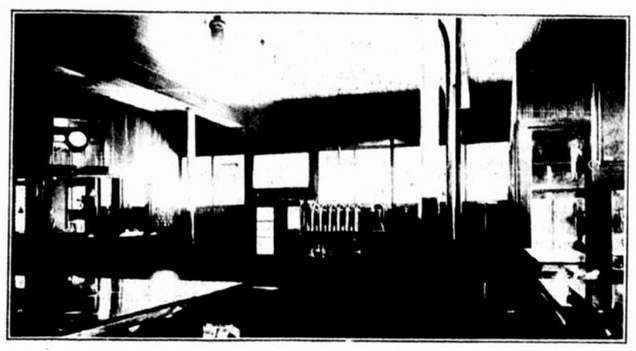
Section of General Store, First Floor, 70x125



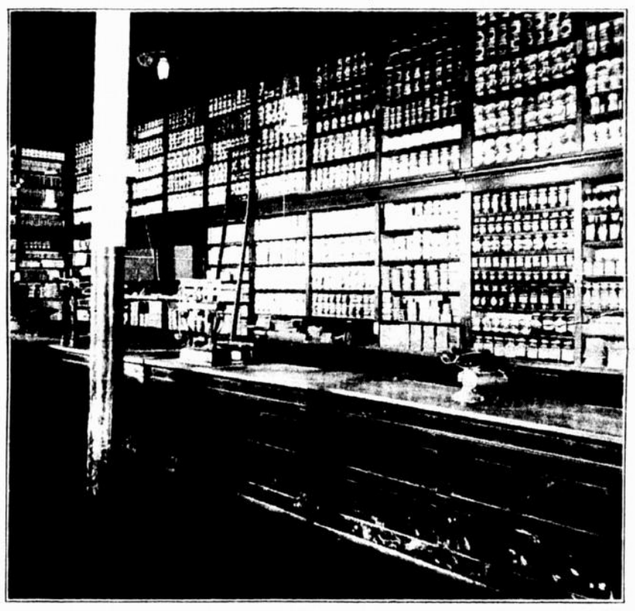
Dry Goods Section, First Floor.



Teamsters Leaving Store.



Manager's Office to right, Cashier, center, General office, left.



First Floor, Grocery Department.

Chinaware and Novelties—Second Floor.

LEWIS E. JOHNSON.

One of our successful and reliable young men of Buxton is L. E. Johnson, general secretary of the Y. M. C. A. He was born in Vicksburg, Mich., in 1878; graduated from the Y. M. C. A. college of Cleveland, Ohio, in 1902; was married June 1, 1904, to Miss Lucy Stewart, one of the amiable and society ladies of Cleveland. He was selected to take charge of the new Y. M. C. A. at Buxton in 1904, where he has built up one of the largest colored Y. M. C. A.'s in America, having a membership of more than 600, with a boys' department separate. He was the young man whom the association sent for to go to Washington, D. C., and try to raise $25,000 to secure the Carnegie gift of $25,000. In four weeks he raised $30,000. He is a refined Christian man.

LEROY TUCKER.

With pleasure we present our many readers with the cut of Mr. LeRoy Tucker, who is secretary of the Boys' Department of the Y. M. C. A. He was educated in the Ohio schools and came to our state about one year ago from Cleveland, Ohio, and like Mr. Johnson, he, too, is an enthusiastic Christian worker. He has built up a large membership among the boys. He was recently married last September to Miss Mary Earley of Cleveland, Ohio, a refined and cultured lady. Young Tucker has a bright future.

MONROE MERCANTILE CO.

Perhaps the greatest commercial enterprise in all Iowa is the Big Store of the Monroe Mercantile Company of Buxton. Its vastness is not conceivable upon entering the town and noting the big white plain building. It would seem that this store would be as any other store in the different camps throughout the state, but upon entering the building one can readily see that this store is of an extraordinary type. The first thing to attract attention is the modern equipment, then the manifest system with which business is carried on throughout the store from basement to roof.

This business in a manner may be termed a monopoly, yet it is a monopoly which is hard to classify. Merchandise is of a better quality and sold at a lower price than most stores in the state. Miners are not compelled to trade at the store. They are not reproved for trading elsewhere. The store is a purely business enterprise and goes after the trade of the town and surrounding country, using common sense business methods.