

Goucher College
Masters in Cultural Sustainability

Capstone Project

Spring 2012

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I. Introduction

Uncle Joe’s Woodpile (formerly known as The Woodland Inn) is a local bar in Short Gap, a rural town in Mineral County, West Virginia. The Woodpile has maintained a central presence in the area for over seventy years, serving as a gathering place for residents of Short Gap and surrounding areas. However, for such a culturally important location, the history of this place can be found only in the minds and homes of patrons. The project “Beyond the Barstool: Culture and Community at The Woodland Inn” sought to identify, record, and present that history and to examine the notion that a neighborhood bar can significantly contribute to the sustainability and cohesion of a community.



(Left) Image 2.047: The Woodland Inn after a tremendous snowstorm.

To illustrate the strong ties that people have formed around The Woodland Inn, this capstone focused on the specific function of collective memory shared through personal photographic archives from patrons of The Woodland Inn. Conducted over the course of eight months, the study involved community interactions, observations, and historical research. This evidence, when presented collectively, demonstrates how The Woodland Inn has and continues to provide a powerful binding force between culture and community. These materials provide a substantial foundation for the transformation of this thesis from an individual endeavor into a community-wide initiative to preserve a dynamic cultural identity.

(Right) Image 2.035 – View of The Woodland Inn from across the street.

Final research is accessible online in the form of a website: thewoodlandinn.wordpress.com.

All research and investigative information is presented in this digital media format in an effort to provide the most comprehensive account of The Woodpile. The website will provide viewers with not only data, but a photographic representation of The Woodpile and its patrons.

In this way, even people that cannot physically visit the bar will be able to gain a broader understanding and view more extensive visual representation of The Woodpile and surrounding areas. This format is also the most appropriate medium because it showcases findings in a much more interactive and engaging way than a static paper. With a website, the



information is always accessible and organized in a way that allows for flexibility, the addition of information after the completion of the formal project, and interactivity with the particular target population and beyond. This site will exist as an immediately useful and applicable resource that interested parties can reference whenever the desire. In addition to the website, final print copies of the paper will be kept in the Frostburg State University Archives and Arnie French, current owner of the establishment will also retain a copy.

II. Theoretical Framework

Although a complete bibliography can be found at the end of the document, this section highlights the four major print sources consulted during the capstone process.

Farr, Sidney Saylor. "Shall We Gather in the Kitchen?" *More than Moonshine: Appalachian Recipes and Recollections*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh, 1983. 1-10. Print.

A resource about the history and evolution of Appalachian cooking, this book offered an in-depth analysis about the utilization of natural resources and its effect on family traditions. Much of this information applies directly to my research about why locals refuse to transplant themselves elsewhere. This sense of cultural belonging provided insight into area employment, customs, and multi-generational recipes that are specific to the region of West Virginia.

Fox, Aaron. *Real Country: Music & Language in Working Class Culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. Print.

Fox's ethnography offered insight into the cultural significance and continued sustainability of country music in the working-class community of Lockhart, Texas. Through personal interviews, fieldwork, and general observation, the author presents a case for music serving as a major means of communication and conduit through which the meanings of place, memory, and culture can be conveyed. This source played an instrumental role in the formulation of my thesis, serving as the most comprehensive piece of literature around which I based my approach to The Woodpile's patrons. I based my own survey techniques, fieldwork strategies, and conversation formats upon those detailed by Fox in this publication. After I gathered substantial evidence, I utilized the author's advice about how to present such findings in both academic and community settings.

Kyvig, David E., and Myron A. Marty. *Nearby History: Exploring the past around You*. Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1982. Print.

This book provides a wealth of information about various aspects of human and material culture, also offering a multitude of approaches in regards to how a researcher can study and analyze the world around them. One particular section that was extremely helpful focused on the topic of artifactual analysis. It centers on five general properties that need to be considered during the interpretation phase of figuring out the significance, context, and history of an artifact. These properties include the determination of the artifact's history, material, construction, design, and

function. In addition to these properties, one of the most important aspects to take into consideration is the presence and eventual combination of intrinsic and extrinsic data. This framework explains the need to examine each artifact physically/directly and also include comprehensive information and research from outside sources. The culmination of these data will provide the most complete context available, especially when paired with first-hand testimonies and accounts made by patrons who remember specific events or stories about each artifact.

Sims, Martha C., and Martine Stephens. *Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of People and Their Traditions*. Logan: Utah State UP, 2005. Print.

This book discusses the practical application of folklore within community settings. I used this resource as a reference throughout my thesis process since it includes many examples about how folklore is integrated and communicated. It also comments on the ability of people to openly and clearly recognize their contributions to specific cultural identities and dynamic history. This publication helped me realize the importance of collective memory, a phenomenon I witnessed during conversations and informal interviews with patrons of The Woodpile.

III. Methodology

Over the course of eight months, I attended benefits, celebrations, and musical performances at the bar. During that time, a diverse network of people who could offer information about the bar's history emerged. A tremendous amount of time was spent interacting with patrons of The Woodpile.

After months of my repeated presence at events, locals began to feel comfortable around me and engage in conversation. It was crucial to integrate myself into the community because that acceptance provided me access to social conversations. It became evident that “talk [was] an art form in and of itself in [the] working-class world, and [that] skill in talking [was] an important axis of social identity” (Fox, p. 41, 2004).

(Below): Owner Arnie French and his wife, Julie, look through The Book of Memories at The Woodpile.



During the conversations that occurred, some patrons recommended possible community figures whose testimonies would serve as evidence for the power of place. Arnie French, current owner of The Woodpile and former manager of The Woodland Inn, served as the project's principal informant. He offered an entire collection of photographs that visually recount his early days as manager. With his long-time experience and knowledge of the community, a framework for expanding my study to the broader group developed. French was instrumental in introducing me to other members of the community who could also share colorful stories about the history of the establishment. Other contacts who shared their personal collections of photographs included Susie Peer (current patron and former bartender) and Charlie Simpson Jr., (patron/son of a

former Woodland Inn owner Charlie Simpson Sr.).

After word-of-mouth spread about Mr. French's enthusiasm for this project, other patrons came forward with images from their own personal collections. More evidence surfaced, predominantly in the form of photographs of community members participating in events, celebrations, or group activities at The Woodland Inn during the 1980s. Copies of all these photographs were then placed in *The Book of Memories*, a tangible and interactive representation in the form of a pseudo-scrapbook. On the pages within this book, there was space to jot down memories, stories, dates, and/or names in relation to what is depicted in each photograph. Once new images were added to its pages, the book circulated around The Woodpile so that patrons could generate context through "tagging."

The opinions, recollections, stories, and perspectives of community members were the most critical component in my research as they allowed me to provide a more complete and personal context to the tangible information/resources I located. The inclusion of individual and collective interpretations contributed to a more comprehensive and intimate profile of The Woodland Inn/The Woodpile. These stories provide evidence to support the importance of collective memory through vivid recollections about the different ways community members describe their relationship with The Woodland Inn and the role they believe it plays in the area. Compiling communal photographic collections prompted conversation and generated memories, reflection, and a sense of togetherness among patrons. The process demonstrates the power of physical artifacts and their ability to spark communication and commonalities among people.

For many patrons, the bar represents the culture of rural West Virginia that is the core of their upbringing. Many patrons choose to remain in the area because they feel overwhelming personal ties to West Virginia. It is apparent that the continued sustainability of this place mirrors community investment; the bar would not survive in another area because it responds to the specific needs of Short Gap. This fact illustrates that "it's possible to put one's roots down so deeply they cannot be satisfactorily transplanted anywhere else" (Farr, p. 3, 1983).

To provide specific context behind this collective community mentality, research also involved consulting and collecting text-based historical primary sources that record the cultural and historical significance of The Woodland Inn. These included historical articles, deeds, plat of conveyance records, census information, geospatial maps, and early archival photographs that provide visual commentary on the economics, industry, and resources in the Short Gap area. When combined and interpreted, this evidence provides a more substantial and detailed community profile that documents how local history and tangible representations of culture reflect community relationships.

This multi-faceted view of the community enhances a sense of place and belonging for those residents in Short Gap and the surrounding areas. As a result of a rise in community cognizance and education about the sustainability of The Woodland Inn/The Woodpile, this project spurred an inter-generational sharing of folkways and beloved cultural customs specific to this community. People felt actively involved in documenting history and, as a result, exhibited a strong sense of personal contribution and investment in this establishment.

All evidential components illustrate that patrons collectively view The Woodland Inn as a multi-purpose space that promotes fellowship. Functioning simultaneously as a social outlet, music venue, town hall, and charity, The Woodland Inn serves whatever function its patrons demand. Conversations that arose as a result of the compilation of personal photographic archives indicated that the impact of this place in the community is profound. It is apparent that the roots of connectedness run deep and the establishment “shares the qualities of sacredness with churches...and qualities of domesticity with homes, while [also embodying its] own specific qualities of poetic license, altered states of consciousness, and theatricality” (Fox, p. 24, 2004). Much like a church, The Woodland Inn has been the chosen venue for wedding receptions, community game feeds, and fundraising benefits. When patrons walk through the doors, it is as though they are members of a congregation entering a sanctuary. The Woodland Inn strongly exhibits its own type of religion, comprised of serious devotion to aspects of vibrant community life. The atmosphere provides solace and an escape from the outside world, allowing people to engage in various activities that boost morale and promote unity.

Because this establishment stresses the importance of core values like kinship, friendship, civic activism, support, and honesty, it resonates strongly with the people in the area who share the same values. In the most basic sense, The Woodland Inn has become a physical representation of the people and the culturally rich life that sustains it.

IV. Background of Mineral County

Short Gap is a small, rural town located in [Mineral County](#) in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia. Originally the subject of vicious legal claims between Maryland and West Virginia, Mineral County was finally declared an official part of West Virginia by the United States Supreme Court in 1910. Because of this court ruling, Mineral County has only been in existence for a period of ninety years.

Apart from the original native settlers known as the [Adena people](#), many other Indian tribes tried to possess the land of modern-day Mineral County. During the late 1500s and early 1600s, the Hurons occupied this area. They were soon defeated by the Iroquois Confederacy and the land became a widely-used hunting ground for all Indian tribes comprising this group. Early European settlements in Mineral County were varied, consisting of German Swiss, Scots, Mennonites, English, Jews, and Italians. The area’s strong industrial background and raw natural resources transformed it into a place that was the target of much conflict between native settlers and European explorations.

Before it was technically designated as an official territory, Mineral County had a [rich history](#) that was substantially impacted by the French and Indian War. Colonel George Washington, who had traveled to the area with a group of land surveyors when he was only sixteen years old, made exhaustive efforts to protect the area from the effects of battle in an attempt to save the people and the precious minerals for which the county was named. These minerals include iron ore and coal, which encouraged significant industrial development in the area. Two major forts, one in Frankfort Village (present day Fort Ashby) and one in the New Creek Valley (present day Keyser), were constructed as a result of Washington’s desire to protect early settlements.

After the war ended, the New Creek Valley emerged as a territory rich with the possibility of commercial trade, largely due to the abundant coal in the area. To entice B&O Railroad and sway them to relocate their facilities from Piedmont, the town was renamed [Keyser](#) in honor of the first vice president of the railroad, William Keyser. Today, [the B&O Railroad](#) operates under the name CSX, still maintaining a powerful presence in West Virginia and serving as a major source of employment for the people in the area.

A. Census and Employment Information

As of the 2010 Census, there were 28,212 people, 10,784 households, and 7,710 families residing in the county. The lifestyle is primarily that of working class, rural America. Most work is union-based physical labor, contract jobs, factory positions, and/or agriculturally-based occupations. Popular places of employment include Luke Paper Mill (of Westernport, Md.), Perdue (of Virginia) or Pilgrim’s Pride (of Moorefield) poultry, and nuclear energy at [ATK](#), an organization that produces materials for building missiles.

An assortment of unions such as iron workers, sheet metal workers, pipefitters, electricians, and the laborers union also serve as the organizations for the people in the area. Union members go through a detailed apprenticeship process for 4-5 years depending on the trade, eventually being hired by a major company once the training is complete. Typically, with these jobs, employees have to leave the state of West Virginia and drive into Maryland since most major businesses, factories, and organizations are based there.



(Right): Union decals on the mirror in the men’s bathroom at The Woodpile.

Many residents also work at CSX (formerly the B&O Railroad), the local railroad whose closest branch is in Cumberland, Md. Furthermore, a lot of self-owned, entrepreneurial auto-tech shops are scattered around the area and also across the MD line. The major correctional facilities (Western Maryland Regional Correctional Institute in Cresaptown, MD, Potomac Highlands Regional Jail in Augusta, WV, and Mexico Farms Federal Correctional Institution in Cumberland, MD) provide a significant number of people with stable jobs. Regardless of the type of job, the cost of living is significantly lower than that of the surrounding metropolitan areas and, as a result, the average income is also lower.

B. Socioeconomic Status

The classification of employment type says a lot about the average Woodpile patron in that it

“plays a significant role in the economic life of the community, especially as an institution for the socialization of wealth and the maintenance of networks of reciprocity” (Fox, p. 23, 2004). Many are trying to overcome severe financial challenges, taking on multiple jobs to help support their family’s well-being.

For example, two regular female patrons of The Woodpile hold multiple jobs. One woman, 23, works full-time during the day at a local bank while maintaining a second full-time job as a bartender during nights and weekends. A second woman, 38, works part-time in the billing and financial department at a local doctor’s office, bartending full-time during the evenings and weekends, and working as a hairstylist on the side.

It is more common for women to work multiple jobs, as most union and/or industrial jobs (which offer competitive salaries and benefits) are dominated by men. However, there are exceptions: one male patron, 42, works night shift at CSX and performs home/auto repair and appliance maintenance tasks on a consultant basis during the day and on the weekends. “Uncle” Joe Corwell, lessee and manager of The Woodpile, simultaneously operates Route 28 Auto to supplement his income.

V. Evolution of The Woodland Inn to The Woodpile

The Woodland Inn was opened in 1935 under the ownership of W.H. Jackson & Charlotte I. Jackson of Pittsburgh, PA. Despite plot size decreasing from an original 20.25 acres in 1934 to 2.27 acres today, the bar is still on the same property that it was almost eighty years ago. Despite a gradual decrease in acreage over a period of more than seven decades, the establishment still remains in its original space and serves the same function today that it did when it was opened in 1935. This information provides evidence to indicate the sustainability of the physical space over time.

(Right): *Plat of Conveyance records depict current property layout.*

Though the first property owners were from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, all other owners of both the physical property and the establishment itself lived within close proximity to The Woodland Inn. Records specify that the list of owners’ permanent addresses ranged from Allegany County, Maryland (15 minutes away), Frankfort District (where The Woodland Inn is actually located), Ridgeley (10 minutes away), to Fort Ashby (7 minutes away). The fact that local people have continued to purchase the property and consistently maintain the business as a bar indicates that it has supported the needs of the community over time.

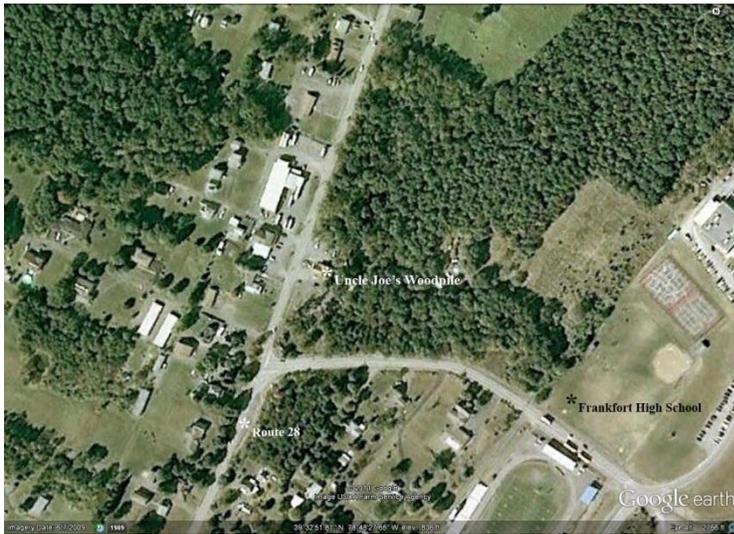


Known today as Uncle Joe’s Woodpile, the bar contributes to the community sustainability. Under the current ownership of Arnold “Arnie” French, it builds community pride by increasing

collective investment in activities and events and enhances the quality of life for area residents.

A. Location

The Woodpile is located at the bottom of a hill in front of Frankfort High School, a local public school that over 500 students attend. The Woodpile is located on the side of Route 28, a main road that winds through Mineral County and connects West Virginia to Maryland. Most of the youth from the regional towns of Ridgeley, Ft. Ashby, and other surrounding areas attend this school. Even the school’s website includes this establishment as a reference on their [“Directions” page](#): “Turn left at the first road after Uncle Joe’s Woodpile.” Because of these two factors, the bar has become an important part of the visual and cultural landscape.



(Left): An aerial view of Short Gap, WV in 2011. Important landmarks include Route 28, The Woodpile, and Frankfort High School. Image courtesy of Google Images.

The Woodpile is a significant cultural landmark and a common thread connecting many community rituals. Before and after Frankfort High School football games, parents of students always come to celebrate a victory or mourn another loss for the

local team. During major holidays, community member birthdays/other celebrations, or when college (West Virginia University Mountaineers) or professional (Pittsburgh Steelers or Baltimore Ravens) football games are on television, patronage is much higher as more people come to the establishment to participate in the festivities.

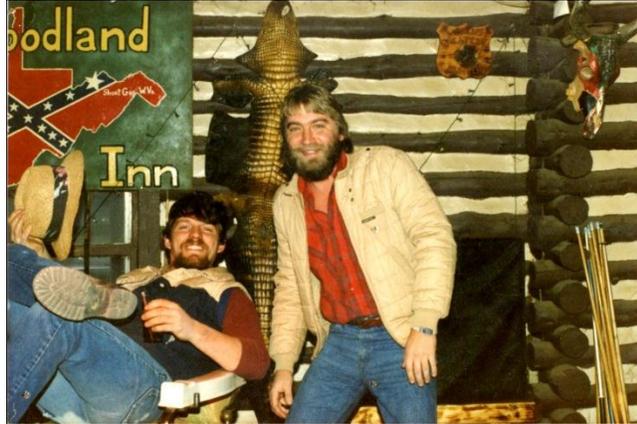


(Above): Street-view images show what community members see when driving by The Woodpile today. Google Images, 2011.

B. Structure

Because of this strong tie with the past, The Woodland Inn's architecture resonates with members of the community. The physical structure reminds patrons of times past, causing them to recollect memories about the lives and times of their grandparents or great-grandparents. The Inn resembles a log cabin, a particular architectural structure common in West Virginia during the era of early European settlement. This specific type of cabin was built for the first time in the Appalachian region of Mineral County during the 1700s as a result of an influx of Scandinavian settlers. Cabins became popular due to the ease of acquiring the plentiful local timber needed for construction.

(Right) Image 2.024: Terry Brelsford and a friend pose for a photograph in the front of a giant crocodile skin that hung on the wall at The Woodland Inn. Note the notching with the logs on the right-hand side of the image.



Depending on the region, there were often variations in building strategies and structures to ensure the stability of the logs. Because the logs at [The Woodland Inn](#) are round, “saddle notching” was utilized when the original building was constructed. This type of notching produces visible projecting corners, meaning that a person is able to view each log separately when looking at all sides of the structure as well as from the corners. An example of this style can be seen [here](#). The only difference between the example and that of The Woodland Inn is the presence of mortar in between each log; the bar exhibits a mixture of cement and mud in between the pieces of timber.

According to Jason Hiatt, current bar patron, a team of men built the bar during the early 1930s. His grandfather was 15 years old at the time and responsible for helping with the construction. Timber was cut manually by the men and each log was stripped of all limbs in preparation for building. Once the logs were prepared, they were hauled down the hill in front of Frankfort High School by multiple horses. The building that stands today remains a reflection of the original Woodland Inn structure.

Owner and former manager Arnie French recalled a period when the bar went under construction in 1998. “I was going to do a couple minor repairs, but it turned into major repairs” he said. After shutting the bar for an entire year to add a new section of the bar, replace the old wood burner, and install central air, French reopened the doors of The Woodland Inn to patrons. He also reinvented the decor of the bar, designing an epoxy resin counter top where patrons could showcase memorabilia and memories about The Woodland Inn.

C. Atmosphere

Depending on the time of day, The Woodpile can be a little smoky for the casual guest. Since smoking is outlawed in Maryland bars but still legal in West Virginia, many people drive over state lines just to enjoy what they consider to be a “perk” of nightlife. The overall atmosphere is dimly lit with the only illumination coming from the jukebox, the liquor shelf, and sometimes a waning stage light or two. The sensory effect is “very much like entering a church...[the room is] a church, created in the image of the perfect beer joint, always open, devoted to the serious pursuit of a precisely sacred combination of music, memory, sociability, and an altered mental state” (Fox, p. 12, 2004).

Most people order from the diverse selection of beer which is limited to only bottles and cans. The menu is basic offering only 19 food options. However, few patrons even consult the menu since they already know exactly what is offered. Common menu selections include homemade chicken wings, chicken tenders, hamburgers/cheeseburgers, and “Hillbilly Salads.” These unique salads are popular in the area and consist of lettuce as a base, freshly cut French fries as the next layer, followed by a combination of pickles, sweet and banana peppers, tomatoes, sautéed onions, Italian seasoning and melted provolone cheese with fresh shredded steak on top.

During periodic game feeds, the menu at The Woodpile changes. Patrons bring in various types of local game including fish, bear, deer, rattlesnake, squirrel, chicken, duck, moose, and pig. These animals are prepared using traditional recipes passed down from generation to generation, indicating the population’s ability to utilize resources without wasting. At a game feed, area residents come to enjoy a buffet-style smorgasbord of these foods for \$10, a profit that is usually donated to a fundraising cause.



(Left) Image 1.002: Arnie standing in front of The Woodland Inn exhibiting his “catch of the day” hanging from a string. These fish were then cooked and served to bar patrons as a special part of the menu, reflecting unique local recipes.

VI. Community Close-up

A. Interview with Arnold French

Mr. Arnold “Arnie” French, current owner and former manager of The Woodland Inn, was my primary contact during this project. With his long-time experience and knowledge of the community, a framework for expanding my study to the broader group developed. French was instrumental in introducing me to other members of the community who could also share

colorful stories about the history of the establishment. Other contacts who shared their personal collections of photographs included Susie Peer (current patron and former bartender) and Charlie Simpson Jr., (patron/son of a former Woodland Inn owner Charlie Simpson Sr.).



(Left): Arnie and Julie together at The Woodpile in 2011.

Mr. French bought The Woodland Inn in 1985 for the sum of \$85,000. He and his wife Julie have been fixtures in the community for over three decades, originally having met at The Woodland Inn prior to his ownership. After moving to Florida for eleven years during the late 1960s and early 1970s and running an air-conditioning business, Mr. French came back to Short Gap because he “just missed West Virginia.” When he found out that the Simpsons wanted to sell The Woodpile, he saw a great opportunity. Although Mr. French had no prior experience owning-or operating a bar, he felt a familiarity with the place from time spent there as a youth while his mother worked there in the 1940s. This bar was very much a part of his childhood.

I was eight years old in 1948. My mom worked here when I was a little kid and then whenever I bought [the bar], she came in and I just gave her the kitchen 'cause she loved to cook. She did a great job. Everything through the kitchen was her. She was a hell of a cook. She made some good meatballs and spaghetti sauce. The girls, the bartenders, would eat all the damn meatballs!

Although The Woodland Inn has always played a central role in the community, it was not always in a positive way. Mr. French described The Woodland Inn during the early 1980's as a place in transition from a “rough bar to a place where men could bring their girlfriends and wives.”

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, The Woodland Inn was a trading post for local drug dealers. Mr. French recounted a story about a dealer walking in to the bar, putting a bag of drugs in the groove of a shelf that used to be located next to a support beam in the middle of the room (which now has been removed), and having a seat at the counter. After having a drink and sitting for a while, the man got up and left. Shortly thereafter, another man stood up and slyly picked up the bag of drugs that had been deposited on the shelf. These were the types of dealings that Mr.

French handled on a regular basis when he first opened the bar.



However, these types of patrons learned quickly that this kind of behavior would not be tolerated under the new ownership and management. A snake-wrangler by hobby, Mr. French threatened drug dealers with snakes he had captured.

(Left) Image 2.025: Arnie French, owner, pokes rattlesnakes with a rod. Arnie (and sometimes patrons of

the Woodland Inn) would spend the summer rattlesnake hunting. Arnie then collected and kept the rattlesnakes they caught, feeding and tending to them until February – time for the annual Woodland Inn game feed.

The rough crowd ultimately left The Woodland Inn once they knew Mr. French was capable of defending himself. He said that “[The Woodland Inn] is not a biker bar or a drug dealer bar. I didn’t want that. It’s a neighborhood bar.”

After purchasing The Woodland Inn, Mr. French proposed to long-time girlfriend and Woodland Inn bartender, Julie. When he approached a local minister about performing the marriage ceremony, the minister refused based on the fact that Mr. French had been married before and that he owned a bar. Two patrons who had known Mr. French since he was a little boy went to the minister to vouch for him, saying that he was “the best man [anyone] could ever meet.” Shortly after this conversation occurred, Mr. French and Julie were invited to attend the minister’s Sunday service.



(Left) Image 2.021: Owner Arnie French and his wife (then girlfriend) Julie.

Mr. French also frequented local church gatherings and events, becoming a central figure in that sphere of community life. The minister was so touched by this gesture that he made a reciprocal effort to visit Mr. French

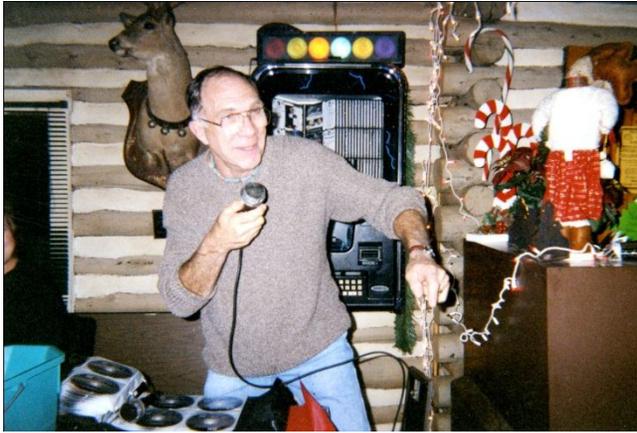
at The Woodland Inn. Quickly realizing that The Woodland Inn wasn’t a negative or sinful addition to the community, the minister applauded Mr. French’s character and agreed to perform the marriage ceremony.

Under Mr. French’s ownership and management, some of the original patrons — the people that comprised the establishment prior to the drug dealers — started returning.

People came in here that used to come in [The Woodland Inn] when my mom worked here when I was younger. I mean all these people started coming in and once they knew I had it and heard that I cleaned it up, a lot of older people came in.



(Right) Image 2.018: Owner Arnie French and a group of band members.



One person at a time, Mr. French helped foster a reinvigorated sense of community and fellowship in the Short Gap area. This one man was instrumental in returning The Woodland Inn to what it was originally: a respectable, relaxed, and genuinely supportive place.

(Left) Image 2.032: Owner Arnie French DJs during a party at The Woodland Inn.

B. Experiences at The Woodland Inn

The common thread among all the stories was that community members cannot remember life *without* The Woodland. The function of this establishment continues to be sustained by memory and by the hearts of those in the community. It means something different to every patron who walks through the doors. To some, the bar is a milestone in their journey from boyhood to manhood and the first place that many had their first drink at 16 or 17 after school. To others, it is a warm, friendly, and welcoming home.



(Left) Image 1.014: A group of patrons come together over dinner at the bar. Mike Fisher makes a toast to celebrate a special moment among friends.

Once a person sits down at the counter, they are supported, encouraged, and cared for by the other patrons who have evolved into a pseudo-family. Patrons tell one another that “It’s okay [insert name here], I’ve got your back. You can get through this.” Still, to many more, The Woodpile is a place where they can escape the burdens and responsibilities of everyday life and just unwind with friends.

The multiple identities of The Woodpile are its true strength. Because various aspects of the bar resonate so strongly with members of the community, it has evolved into an establishment that represents tiny little slivers of the life that sustains it. But the relationship between The Woodpile and its patrons is symbiotic – the bar needs the financial support and frequent attendance of its community members just like the community members need the ambiance, welcoming arms, and liveliness of the bar. Each simultaneously does whatever it takes to sustain the other.

(Right) Image 2.026: Regular patron Bob Lanbeh leans in as owner Arnie French raises his 'Old German' beer (brewed by Iron City Brewing Company in Pittsburg, PA – locally distributed by the Queen City Brewing Company, Cumberland, MD) while sitting at the bar counter.



Over 70 people were asked to try and pinpoint exactly what it is that keeps them coming back to The Woodpile year after year. To further emphasize the critical nature of bar and its central presence in the community, patrons were informally surveyed about their personal history with the establishment. Considering the notion of “folklore as a way of communicating values and information among members of a group,” these surveys illuminated the versatile nature of The Woodpile (Sims and Stephens, p. 175, 2005).



(Left) Image 2.030: Buck Foutz dancing with a band at The Woodland Inn. Photo dates prior to 1985 because the corner extension of the bar hadn't been built yet.

Patrons classified their experiences and reflections about the bar into four main categories: childhood memories, benefits, music, and people. Survey data indicates that fifteen patrons (20.8%) said the bar significantly contributed to their childhood memories. Six individuals (8.3%) noted that the bar is most recognized for its charity and fundraising benefits and another seven (9.7%) classified the particular style of music and its constant presence as the most defining feature. Finally, forty-four people (61.1%) stated that their repeated patronage is due to their desire to interact with, befriend, and commune with other people in the community. Based on these percentages, it is apparent that the people who visit the bar recognize the importance of community and the impact personal relationships have on the stability, function, and sustainability of a physical place.

i. Childhood Memories

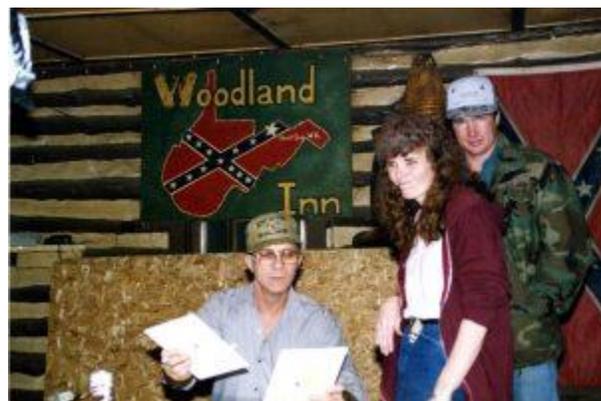
Fifteen patrons said that the bar represented substantial memories from their childhoods (equal to 20.8%). Because The Woodpile is located at the bottom of the hill from Frankfort High School, it is a highly visible part of the cultural landscape. Under Mr. French's ownership, the establishment adopted a neighborhood casualness and family-friendly atmosphere where people of all ages felt comfortable and secure. In the 1980s, it was not uncommon to see many young children in the bar waiting for their parents. Although it was strictly prohibited for children to sit at the bar counter, they were allowed to sit in booths while their parents participated in local shooting matches hosted by The Woodland Inn. For example, Tammy Houdersheldt has lived in Mineral County since birth. She mentioned that as a senior, she could leave Frankfort High School, and walk down the hill to The Woodland Inn after school to legally have a beer.



(Left) Image 2.022: Shared by Arnie French, this photograph depicts four young boys, BJ Snyder, Mike Wheeler, Scott Snyder, and Bruce Snyder, drinking sodas at The Woodland Inn after school. These boys were waiting on their fathers who were participating in shooting matches.

Many adults in the area told Mr. French that there was no place for them to shoot various types of rifles recreationally in a community setting. Hearing those pleas, Mr. French drove around the neighborhood and went door-to-door to gain the permission of all local residents to hold periodic shooting competitions at the bar.

After the immediate community (those within one mile of The Woodland Inn) gave their approval, Mr. French made sure that the police department was also in agreement in order to avoid legal repercussions and liabilities. Soon, shooting matches became a regular part of The Woodland Inn's weekly schedule of activities. Because of this addition, parents and children were able to enjoy themselves at the bar.



(Right) Image 2.001: Bar owner Arnie French (left) looks at paperwork while talking to Ray Snyder and his wife, Deborah. This particular photograph was taken on the day of one of the Woodland Inn shooting matches. Arnie was usually in charge of registration.

Today, many of the children, who are now adults, still come to the establishment frequently. Due to liquor board regulators who monitor bar activities very closely, children are now strictly prohibited from the premises and a “must be 21” policy is enforced. The only exception to this rule occurs during charity benefits when parents occasionally bring their children. Most benefits are held outside, so laws prohibiting the presence of children are more flexible.

ii. Benefits

Photo credit: John Brode, 2011. This image depicts The Woodpile during one of its summer charity benefits. Although the inside of the establishment remains open if the benefit is held on-site, all events incorporate a large outdoor setting which typically includes a stage, dance area, and some seating for attendees.



Six people (equal to 8.3%) noted that the benefits were the most notable aspect of bar. Charity benefits are a recent development for The Woodpile. Created as a result of community desire to help alleviate financial burdens associated with cancer treatments, these benefits were immediately successful and attracted quite an outpouring of supporters.

In 2008, the bar created “The Rednecks,” a volunteer-based team motivated by the desire of the local community to raise awareness and funds to help supplement the cost of medical care for those in the community affected by cancer. The vision of the organization is to engage the maximum number of community members by implementing new strategies in marketing, advertising, and promotion in an effort to increase awareness about the effects of cancer and to raise funds for those affected by the disease.

Due to rapidly increasing local involvement, Uncle Joe’s Rednecks host multi-annual events and have raised a total of \$46,000 donated to the Western Maryland Health Systems Regional Cancer Patient Fund over a period of four years. Typically, Uncle Joe’s Rednecks host at least three benefits a year. Events are open to the general public and attract a diverse group ranging from ages 21 to 70. These benefits provide a space in which participants can celebrate their culture, help their fellow citizens in supporting a good cause, enjoy several excellent local live bands, and partake in eating, drinking, and dancing.

These benefits include the Cancer Bash, an event held during the first weekend in June that incorporates a combination of live music provided by local bands, raffles, live auctions, and a

diverse selection of locally popular food and drink options. [The Redneck Float](#) is a family-friendly event that takes place towards the end of June and centers along the South Branch of the Potomac River in Hampshire County, West Virginia. At this event, participants construct “floats” out of various materials and pay to enter their creations in a three hour trip downstream.

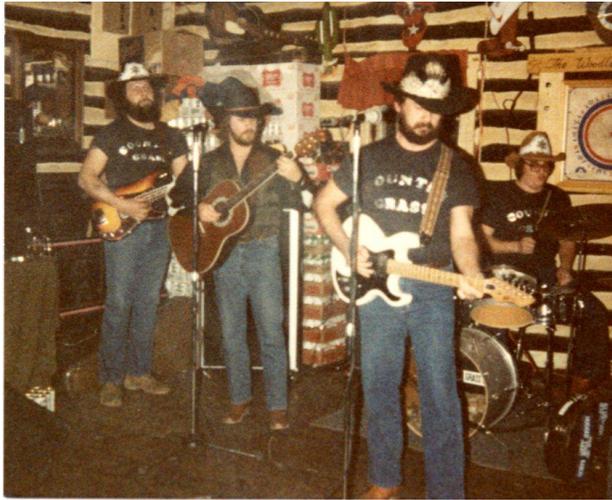


After the actual floating event, the party and fundraising continues at a camp along the river with four to eight local bands, raffles, t-shirt sales, and festivities. During the 2010 [year](#), this event raised \$12,000.

(Left) Image 1.031: Band performance at The Woodland Inn. Pictured also are two deer heads mounted to the wall, reflecting the local sport of hunting and the pride associated with killing large bucks. These two particular mounts are still in place in the bar, and can be found in the rear on either side of the old stone fireplace mantle.

Due to the many requests to host another benefit in 2011, The Rednecks added a third event to their schedule: The Cancer Charity Ride. This event was a three hour motorcycle ride totaling almost 100 miles. Along the journey, participants stopped at another local establishment that was hosting a smaller benefit of the same nature. Once again, The Woodpile provided community members with an outlet to encourage collaboration and unity among local residents. After the ride commenced, participants met back at Uncle Joe’s Woodpile for a celebratory concert and cookout. Sometimes charity fundraisers include game feeds which consist of patrons preparing local game including bear, rattlesnake, deer, goose, chicken, and pork and other traditional West Virginian recipes such as corn pudding, homemade biscuits, stew, and ramps.

iii. Music



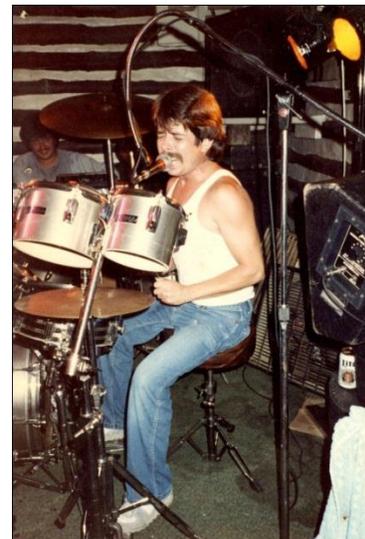
(Left) Image 1.010: Shared by Charlie Simpson, Jr., this image is of locally renowned country and bluegrass band, Country Grass. This band performed frequently at The Woodland Inn. Pictured are Brooks Warner, Terry Pateow, and Donnie Gibson in 1983.

Seven patrons (equal to 9.7%) mentioned music as an important part of The Woodland Inn. The bar has always been open, friendly, and welcoming to musicians. Under Mr. French's ownership, it became the only bar in the tri-state area to feature live bands every weekend. Patrons recall *Country Grass*, a

West Virginia band popular at the Inn during the 1980s. Today, common acts include Renegade, Strangers with Candy, Tucker Hill Haze, NOBIGDIEHL, "Hondo" (Tony Haan), Lady Invidia, and Southern Grind. These bands play everything from hard rock, metal, classic country, and acoustic sets to beloved southern rock ballads.

(Right) Image 2.003: Close-up of drummer Pat McGreary singing during a band performance.

When bands aren't playing during the week, patrons play their favorite tunes on the jukebox. Music selections range from modern-day popular artists such as Adele, Blake Shelton, Eric Church, and the Dave Matthews Band to old classics including Metallica, ACDC, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Janis Joplin, Journey, and Waylon Jennings. Many of these artists sing about financial troubles, small town heroes, the importance of family, and the desire to leave home but the inevitable realization of having to stay. Patrons enjoy listening to such songs because the subject matter is "real....[signifying] relationships and memories" deeply personal to the listener (Fox, p. 17, 2004).



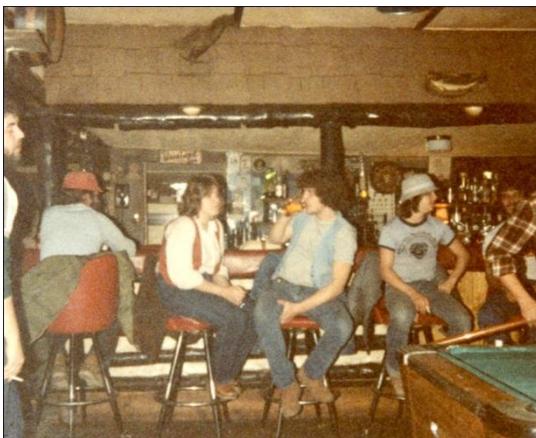


(Above): Tony “Hondo” Haan (far right) sings with Todd Southerly of Tucker Hill Haze (far left) during a concert at The Woodpile.

Tony ‘Hondo’ Haan has been considered a ‘regular’ at The Woodland Inn for a long time, immediately recognized and warmly acknowledged by other patrons when he walks through the door. He sings often at The Woodpile as a solo artist, but also books shows in the West Virginia area as a member of a locally popular band, Renegade. Also in Renegade is Tony’s son, Anthony, an ambitious young man who attends college in Nashville, Tennessee. Like his father, Anthony’s musical skills are remarkable, highly respected by those who hear him perform. Tony instilled in his son from a young age the importance of giving back to the community. As a result of this shared wisdom, Renegade makes frequent appearances during summer charity benefits hosted by The Woodpile. Their energy, positivity, and impressive repertoire of songs continue to be enjoyed and appreciated by local community members.

iv. People

(Below) Image 1.012: A crowded bar depicting patrons drinking, smoking, and playing pool in 1983. Pictured are Tammy (Fletcher) Barb and her husband, Colin, and John Wertz. Wertz was the local record holder for the most consumed “Knobley Mountain Slammers,” a drink consisting of ½ beer and ½ peach schnapps. He drank a total of fifteen.



An overwhelming forty-four patrons (equal to 61.1%) attributed their prolonged attendance to the quality of people who come to the bar and the connections that they form with one another. Tammy Houdersheldt explained why she feels comfortable coming into the establishment alone:

I think it’s about trust because the people are local. I never come in here and not know someone. As a woman, I feel completely comfortable...not like at other bars...because it’s like family...someone would have my back if somebody started something. I know that.

Statements like that speak volumes about the protective atmosphere that the bar provides for its patrons. Scott Iliff, a man born and raised in Short Gap, has also been coming to the bar since the age of 18. When asked what he loves most about the place, he stressed the importance of continuity: “It’s always been here and it’s always gonna be here. It’s like a family. This place IS family.” He recognizes the bar’s presence as a fixture in the community. He also noted that the name change from The Woodland Inn to The Woodpile did not change anything about how the business operated; the same types of people still sit at the bar and watch their favorite teams play on television, listen to the same types of music, and participate in community celebrations like game feeds or dart games.



Image 2.046: A group of people share drinks during dinner at The Woodland Inn. Arnie French, owner, is pictured on the far left and his mother Melody is pictured in the near right. Melody tended bar at the Woodland Inn in 1948.

Tony “Hondo” Haan echoed sentiments similar to those of Tammy and Scott. The bar is a place that nurtures and sustains its many patrons by providing them with a space to interact with their community. Tony explained that when he tells his buddies that he’s heading home, they assume that he means he’s going to the Woodpile. When asked why he associates the bar with the traditional sense of the word “home,” Tony said that it is because “the folks at The Woodpile are just like [his] family. The only difference [is that he] like[s] being around them.” Despite humorous answers such as this, it is evident that patrons feel a strong connection to the bar and its place in the community.

When prompted with the question “What is important to you,” many patrons described some beloved tradition and the ability to interact with people from the local community. Some recounted the memory of bringing in fresh deer meat to prepare for a community game feed or practicing with a team to prepare for the horseshoe championship game, but all mentioned traditions centered around The Woodpile. It is evident that this place is a “deeply valued site for the highly ritualized production of cultural identity and community solidarity, and [it] functions as [a] community center in [a] very practical way” (Fox, p. 24, 2004).

(Below) Image 3.012: Shared by Susie Peer, this image shows the type of atmosphere that The Woodland Inn embodied. Susie, former bartender at the establishment, is pictured here with her close friend, Kelley Faust, next to “the moose” which still hangs in The Woodpile today.



The Woodpile serves as an incredible social platform where many people can connect with one another. Popular activities include pool, darts, horseshoes, concerts, and lively conversation. Susie Peer [pictured in back right] describes The Woodland Inn as a place synonymous with memories surrounding her youth. For many people, the establishment played a pivotal role in their upbringing, serving as a place they frequented as a child before visiting the bar as an adult.

Evidence also shows that interest in and love of The Woodpile remains in the family, often passed down from parents to their children. Current examples of this include:

Tony Haan and Anthony Haan (father and son)
Derek Dayton and Dean Dayton (siblings)
Jenny Jewell and Brian Jewell (mother and son)
Bill Adams, Sr. and Bill Adams, Jr. (father and son)
Troy Saville and Danna Saville (father and daughter)
Randy Whitacre and Stephen Whitacre (father and son)
Dave and Cherise Southerly and Todd Southerly (parents and son)
Mark White and Marsha White (father and daughter)

VII. Conclusion

The historical and photographic evidence gathered during the capstone process illustrates the positive impact that a place can have within a community. By locating and interpreting archival records that offered physical and tangible insight into the past of The Woodland Inn, I supported my hypothesis that The Woodland Inn significantly contributed to the sustainability of the community of Short Gap. The establishment still remains a central location in Short Gap where people come to feel a sense of unity and connectedness.

Photographs from personal archives comprise the strongest portion of evidence to denote the impact of The Woodland Inn in the lives of its patrons. After compiling copies of all original images and including them in a Book of Memories, I circulated the book to present-day patrons and encouraged them to provide information about the context of each image. Written comments surfaced predominantly in the form of names, dates, and locations that helped offer more comprehensive context clues about happenings in the photographs. This interactive element of “tagging” rekindled old connections among patrons and promoted conversations, story-telling, and fond memories.

Throughout this process, I examined and collected physical artifacts such as photographs and ephemera. These items show evidence of a specific time and also serve as “reminders” when interpreted by those who lived directly during that time, revealing even more history. A [story](#) in my own local newspaper from North Carolina highlighted Jason Couch, pharmacist and a man I have known since I was a little girl. For over 22 years he has collected ephemera and artifacts that help provide context about the history of the area. His collecting stimulated community involvement in and sustenance of the collective memory. People continue to approach him with photographs and memorabilia, trusting that their contributions and memories are safe. His ability to successfully engage the community greatly influenced my method of creating the Book of Memories. Like Couch, I wanted to transform the project into something that was important to the people:

It’s really been a community effort. People have been very generous with their time and their stories. It’s something I never could have done by myself. I hope it’s something the community will be proud of. I’ve not had anyone I’ve asked for help turn me down throughout the entire process. People have been really encouraging, and that’s what has made it fun.

It is important to document and explain the meaning behind these collections because they are significant to the people in the community. The Book of Memories now exists as a physical representation of and cultural resource for the community of Short Gap, West Virginia. When thumbing through the pages, people can remember the past and communicate their memories with their children and grandchildren, an action that contributes to continued multi-generational sustainability. Along with Couch, I feel that “if what I’m doing makes any difference to anybody and opens up a few eyes to what we need to save, then it’s worth it.” I am deeply grateful for the community support that was extended to me during this process.

VIII. Finding Aid

The Woodland Inn/Short Gap, West Virginia Research Collection

A Preliminary Inventory

Collection Overview

- Title: Woodland Inn Photographs
- Creator: Lara Justis
- Extent: Three photograph series containing a total of 106 color images
- Date Span: 1979-late 1980s
- Abstract: The images in this collection were shared by Charlie Simpson, Jr., Arnold French and Susie Peer. The individuals retain all rights to the ownership of these photographs.

Index Terms

Woodland Inn
Woodpile
Short Gap – West Virginia
Mineral County – West Virginia
Arnie French

Administrative Information

- Access Restrictions: The collection is open for research.
- Use Restrictions: Prints and/or publication of images are not permitted without the permission of Lara Justis and Sarah Umstot.
- Accession Information: The metadata inventory and image files are formatted digitally and will be accessible at the Frostburg State University Archives. Hard copies of all metadata and corresponding photographs will also be printed for further reference.
- Processing Information: Each image has been scanned in color on a Hewlett-Packard flatbed scanner at a high-resolution (600 dpi) so as to produce a final image that meets current archival standards.

Biographical/Provenance Note

The Woodland Inn photographs were referenced in a website created in conjunction with a Master's thesis for the Cultural Sustainability program at Goucher College. The website and finding aid are part of a community documentation project completed by Lara Justis during 2011-2012. The works of three photographers are featured: Charlie Simpson, Sr. (former owner of The Woodland Inn), Arnold French (former manager and current owner of The Woodpile), and Susie Peer (current patron of The Woodpile and former bartender at The Woodland Inn).

Scope and Contents

The Woodland Inn (recently renamed "The Woodpile" when leased by Joe Corwell six years ago) is located in Short Gap, West Virginia. This unique place operates as a bar, musical venue, and community center that has been in operation since 1935.

This collection contains photographs, maps, records, and other historical documents that help document The Woodland Inn/The Woodpile of Short Gap, West Virginia. The bulk of materials are photographs that date from 1970-1989. The photographs are from personal collections shared by members of the Short Gap area.

Processing Notes and Arrangement

Arrangement notes: Images organized chronologically by collection series.

Image numbers also determined by specific photograph series (i.e. all photographs shared by Charlie Simpson, Jr. were received first and, therefore, constitute the first series of images.) Example: 1.001 signifies that the photograph is Series 1, Image 1.

Photograph Listing

Series I: Photographs shared by Charlie Simpson, Sr.

- 1.001– Routine band practice on stage at The Woodland Inn in 1979. Pictured are Dick and Cheryl Orndoff and Dick Adkins.
- 1.002 – Arnie standing in front of The Woodland Inn exhibiting his "catch of the day" hanging from a string. These fish were then cooked and served to bar patrons as a special part of the menu, reflecting unique local recipes.
- 1.003 – Normal "bar crowd" gathered together in fellowship at one of The Woodland Inn float trips along the South Branch of the Potomac River. Pictured are Raymond Snyder and Colin Barb with his wife, Tammy.
- 1.004 – Linda Parsons partakes in outdoor activities like horseshoes and communal "catch."
- 1.005 – Close-up partial image of Charlie Simpson, Sr., fixture of the bar and ten year lessee.
- 1.006 – Rehearsal for a weekend show at The Woodland Inn. Pictured are Alvin Kesner and Terry Pateow.
- 1.007 – Front view of The Woodland Inn from across the street. Patron vehicles in parking lot

- include those of Frank Travis and Jentry “Chuck” Shanholtz.
- 1.008 – Jay Abe and a female patron enjoy a drink at the bar counter.
 - 1.009 – Charlie Simpson, Sr., 10 year lessee of The Woodland Inn leans up against a car while sporting a “Woodland Inn” polo shirt.
 - 1.010 – Band performance of locally renowned country and bluegrass band, “Country Grass” on stage at The Woodland Inn. Pictured are Brooks Warner, Terry Pateow, and Donnie Gibson in 1983.
 - 1.011 – Charlie Simpson, Sr.’s beer van in 1982 that was known to other patrons as “Charlie’s Daily Drive.” This vehicle was always visible, parked in front of The Woodland Inn when Charlie was inside.
 - 1.012 – A crowded bar depicting patrons drinking, smoking, and playing pool in 1983. Pictured are Tammy (Fletcher) Barb and her husband, Colin, and John Wertz. Wertz was the local record holder for the most consumed “Knobley Mountain Slammers,” a drink consisting of ½ beer and ½ peach schnapps. He drank a total of fifteen.
 - 1.013 – Woodland Inn patrons Bobby “Chops” Lambert and Cherise Southerly engage in conversation.
 - 1.014 – A group of patrons come together over dinner at the bar. Mike Fisher makes a toast to celebrate a special moment among friends.
 - 1.015 – Male patron Hill enjoys the relaxed atmosphere at the bar during summer months in 1981.
 - 1.016 – A female patron enjoys a cigarette while talking on the phone at one of The Woodland Inn float trips.
 - 1.017 – A pregnant female patron partakes in festivities outside the bar in the summer.
 - 1.018 – Close-up of female patron reclined in a chair during a get-together formed by members of The Woodland Inn crowd.
 - 1.019 – Close-up of female patron wearing sunglasses.
 - 1.020 – Close-up of male patron wearing a yellow shirt.
 - 1.021 – One of many regular Woodland Inn bands performing for patrons.
 - 1.022 – Close-up side profile of a lead singer during band performance at The Woodland Inn.
 - 1.023 – Sleeping in one of the booths at The Woodland Inn.
 - 1.024 – Couple wearing matching “4x4” mud-bog t-shirts and smoking cigars. The woman wears an over-sized sombrero and large plastic glasses during her time at the bar.
 - 1.025 – Man with folded hands passed out on top of an antique ‘milk-jug’ beside the coolers at The Woodland Inn. The milk-jug can still be found next to the door.
 - 1.026 – Side view of The Woodland Inn which depicts a muddy parking lot and a considerable crowd. The “beer van” is shown near the top right of the photograph, directly in front of an RV carrying musical equipment for the live band performing inside.
 - 1.027 – A male patron dressed as Elvis sings to the crowd during a band performance at The Woodland Inn.
 - 1.028 – An Elvis impersonator sings to the crowd of people eating dinner at The Woodland Inn.
 - 1.029 – An Elvis impersonator does a side split while singing to music from the band.
 - 1.030 – An illuminated “Woodland Inn” shines brightly to attract passing traffic at night. The billboard below the sign advertising menu options and local bands scheduled to play that weekend.
 - 1.031 – Band performance at The Woodland Inn. Pictured also are two deer heads mounted to the wall, reflecting the local sport of hunting and the pride associated with killing large

- bucks. These two particular mounts are still in place in the bar, and can be found in the rear on either side of the old stone fireplace mantle.
- 1.032 – A band consisting of three men and a female lead singer perform at The Woodland Inn.
 - 1.033 – A male patron wearing a hat practices guitar at what appears to be an empty bar.
 - 1.034 – Another band performs at The Woodland Inn. This band is more string-based; pictured are men playing a guitar, cello, fiddle, and banjo.
 - 1.035 – Woodland Inn patrons gather at a patron’s “camp” along Patterson’s Creek during the summer.
 - 1.036 – A small-scale model of The Woodland Inn rests on a pool table inside the bar. The model is said to have been built by the Short Gap Volunteer Fire Department and is kept in safekeeping at the home of Charlie Simpson, Jr.
 - 1.037 – The Woodland Inn covered in snow during a typical winter in West Virginia. The tree pictured is no longer there. This photo is circa 1975, no exact date found.
 - 1.038 – Patrons enjoy food at the bar counter.
 - 1.039 – The pool table illuminated by a personalized hanging light inside the bar. Pictured is a young Charlie Simpson, Jr. taking a reflective photograph of his father, Charlie Simpson, Sr.
 - 1.040 – Close-up of the “WOODLAND INN” sign located at the edge of the bar’s lot closest to the road. The same structure can be seen outside at The Woodland Inn today.
 - 1.041 – View from across the street depicting a slushy parking lot at The Woodland Inn after a big snow. The bar remains open and ready to attend to the needs of its patrons.
 - 1.042 – View from across the street indicates a full parking lot (and therefore a considerable crowd) at The Woodland Inn.

Series II: Photographs shared by Arnie French

- 2.001 – Bar owner Arnie French (left) looks at paperwork while talking to Ray Snyder and his wife, Deborah. This particular photograph was taken on the day of one of the Woodland Inn shooting matches. Arnie was usually in charge of registration.
- 2.002 – Band performance inside on the stage at The Woodland Inn. Close-up of lead guitarist.
- 2.003 – Close-up of drummer Pat McCreary singing during a band performance.
- 2.004 – Electric guitar solo during a band performance.
- 2.005 – A personalized band box that reads “Dixie Express,” a group known for their unique combination of southern rock and country.
- 2.006 – The results of a “Mohawk Party,” an occasion when a group of male patrons decided to give each other Mohawks while partying at The Woodland Inn. Pictured are Greg Houdersheldt, Terry Brelsford, and Buck Foutz.
- 2.007 – A deep sack containing a rattlesnake caught by Woodland Inn owner, Arnie French.
- 2.008 – Side view of The Woodland Inn during the day. Across the street you can see a building being constructed that is today a Roaring Springs Water distribution center.
- 2.009 – Side view of the sign at the front of the bar’s lot which advertises a band performance by “Country Grass.”
- 2.010 – Owner Arnie French chops wood outside The Woodland Inn.
- 2.011 – Owner Arnie French holds adopted Woodland Inn mascot, a deer named Bucky.
- 2.012 – Woodland Inn pet, Bucky, in the woods behind the bar.

- 2.013 – A male patron standing on a wooden bridge in the woods behind the bar.
- 2.014 – A tee-pee and picnic bench located outside the Woodland Inn on the land to the East. The Woodland Inn used to hold tee-pee parties that served as a change of scenery for patrons and also as an educational opportunity for children in the area.
- 2.015 – Bucky, the Woodland Inn’s pet deer, sports a red bow while standing next to a pile of chopped wood.
- 2.016 – Owner Arnie French kneels to interact with the bar’s young mascot, Bucky.
- 2.017 – Two male patrons (Ronnie Keifer is on the right) present their prize-winning fish at The Woodland Inn.
- 2.018 – Owner Arnie French and a group of band members.
- 2.019 – A Rottweiler and Chihuahua play inside The Woodland Inn.
- 2.020 – A close-up of a drummer practicing for a show – July 1984.
- 2.021 – Owner Arnie French and his wife (then girlfriend) Julie.
- 2.022 – Four young boys, BJ Snyder, Mike Wheeler, Scott Snyder, and Bruce Snyder, drink sodas at The Woodland Inn after school. These boys were waiting on their fathers who were participating in shooting matches.
- 2.023 – Band performance by “Dixie Express” on stage at The Woodland Inn.
- 2.024 – Terry Brelsford and a friend pose for a photograph in the front of a giant crocodile skin that hung on the wall at the bar.
- 2.025 – Arnie French, owner, pokes rattlesnakes with a rod. Arnie (and sometimes patrons of the Woodland Inn) would spend the summer rattlesnake hunting. Arnie then collected and kept the rattlesnakes they caught, feeding and tending to them until February – time for the annual Woodland Inn game feed.
- 2.026 – Regular patron Bob Lanbeh leans in as owner Arnie French raises his ‘Old German’ beer (brewed by Iron City Brewing Company in Pittsburg, PA – locally distributed by the Queen City Brewing Company, Cumberland, MD) while sitting at the bar counter.
- 2.027 – Arnie French, owner, looks for rattlesnakes in the West Virginian woods.
- 2.028 – Close-up of lead guitarist and singer during a band performance at the bar.
- 2.029 – Close-up of lead singer standing on the wooden railing on stage at the front of The Woodland Inn.
- 2.030 – Buck Foutz dancing with a band at The Woodland Inn. Photo dates prior to 1985 because corner extension of the bar hadn’t been built yet.
- 2.031 – Led by owner Arnie French, Larry Parsons and three other men go rattlesnake hunting.
- 2.032 – Owner Arnie French DJs during a party at The Woodland Inn.
- 2.033 – Ronnie Keifer shows off his impressive catch of the day.
- 2.034 – Owner Arnie French and Terry Brelsford laughing together during the aftermath of the Mohawk party.
- 2.035 – View of The Woodland Inn from across the street.
- 2.036 – Female patron feeding the bar’s mascot, a deer named Bucky.
- 2.037 – Side view of a woman feeding the bar’s mascot, Bucky. He ate saltine crackers and drank Miller Light beer.
- 2.038 – Greg Houdersheldt smiles and exhibits his new haircut during the Mohawk Party.
- 2.039 – Owner Arnie French and a friend hunt for rattlesnakes.
- 2.040 – A male patron looks for rattlesnakes.
- 2.041 – Another male patron searches for rattlesnakes on a pile of rocks.

- 2.042 – A close-up of Terry Brelsford inside The Woodland Inn before the Mohawk Party.
- 2.043 – Julie French (Arnie’s wife) and her sister, Pam Umstot, during a New Year’s celebration at the bar.
- 2.044 – Owner Arnie French holds a cloth sack for a friend dangling a rattlesnake.
- 2.045 – Owner Arnie French poses with Buck Foutz near the stage at the bar before the Mohawk Party.
- 2.046 – A group of people share drinks during dinner at The Woodland Inn. Arnie French, owner, is pictured on the far left and his mother Melody is pictured in the near right. Melody tended bar at the Woodland Inn in 1948.
- 2.047 – The Woodland Inn after a tremendous snowstorm.
- 2.048 – Wooden shelter in the woods of West Virginia.
- 2.049 – Arnie French, owner, chops wood.

Series III: Photographs shared by Susie Peer

- 3.001 – Owner of The Woodland Inn, Arnie French, sitting at the bar counter with a pool stick.
- 3.002 – Woodland Inn owner, Arnie French.
- 3.003 – Woodland Inn regular, Buck Foutz, pictured drinking a Miller Lite at a camp with fellow Woodland Inn patrons. This man was known among other patrons as the embodiment of The Woodland Inn.
- 3.004 – Male patron reclined in a chair by the fire.
- 3.005 – Raymond Snyder and Buster Judy enjoying a drink at the bar.
- 3.006 – Julie French (Arnie’s wife) dancing in her seat inside The Woodland Inn.
- 3.007 – Raymond Snyder and Buster Judy smiling for a photo at the bar counter inside.
- 3.008 – Woodland Inn bartender Susie Peer (behind the counter) and her mother, Carolyn Peer-Myers.
- 3.009 – Patrons Regina Brelsford, Terry Brelsford, Buck Foutz, and Susie Peer gathered around a fire to enjoy a night in at camp along the South Branch of the Potomac River.
- 3.010 – Susie Peer and Kelley Foutz. The photo also shows the sale of cigarettes (on the wall in the back), a practice that has not been continued through the present time.
- 3.011 – Kelly Foutz behind the bar at The Woodland Inn. Sign pictured in the back requests that members pay dues by July 1st, 1988 and that all patrons must present their cards.
- 3.012 – This image shows the type of atmosphere that The Woodland Inn embodied. Susie Peer, former bartender at the bar, is pictured here with her close friend, Kelley Faust, next to the moose which still hangs in the same place today.
- 3.013 – Regina Brelsford sitting around a fire in the woods by the river.
- 3.014 – Jimmy Lambert, and Terry Brelsford, reclined in chairs by a fire while camping. Depicted on the far right is Woodland Inn owner, Arnie French, and wife Julie.
- 3.015 – Buster Judy and Karen Foutz (known as “Mrs. Yuck”) share a hug while sitting at the bar counter at The Woodland Inn.

Research Materials: Archival Documents

Plat of Conveyance Records

Plat of Conveyance from V. Pauline Blackburn to Charles H. Simpson. 6 January 1983.

Frankfort District, Mineral County, West Virginia, Deed Book 231, page 81. County

Recorder's Office, Mineral County, Keyser, West Virginia.

Deed Records

Deed of Sale from W.H. Jackson and wife to Mary Alice Phillips of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. 3

October 1934. Willed to Ada Phillips and then to Susan Farris of Allegany County, Maryland. Mineral County, West Virginia, Deed Book 53, pages 271-272. County Recorder's Office, Mineral County, Keyser, West Virginia.

Deed of Sale from Ada Philips Farris, Susan Farris Schaidt, and John F. Schaidt III of Allegany County, Maryland. 15 October 1946. Transferred to Floyd P. Grace of Mineral County, West Virginia. Mineral County, West Virginia, Deed Book 79, pages 228-229. County Recorder's Office, Mineral County, Keyser, West Virginia.

Deed of Sale from Floyd P. Grace to Sarah C. Grace (widow) of Frankfort District, Mineral County, West Virginia, and in turn to Virginia P. Blackburn. 21 August 1952. Mineral County, West Virginia, Deed Book 102, pages 272-275. County Recorder's Office, Mineral County, Keyser, West Virginia.

Deed of Sale from Virginia P. Blackburn and Charles E. Blackburn transferred to Elizabeth L. Simpson and Charles H. Simpson of Ridgeley, West Virginia. 3 January 1983. Mineral County, West Virginia, Deed Book 231, pages 78-80. County Recorder's Office, Mineral County, Keyser, West Virginia.

Deed of Sale from Elizabeth L. Simpson and Charles H. Simpson transferred to Arnold L. French and Joe D. Osceola of Fort Ashby, West Virginia. 27 June 1985. Mineral County, West Virginia, Deed Book 240, pages 326-328. County Recorder's Office, Mineral County, Keyser, West Virginia.

Topographical Maps

“Map I of Mineral County Showing Topography, WV Geological Survey 1923.” Web. 15 Sept 2011.

[http://cartweb.geography.ua.edu:9001/StyleServer/calcrng?cat=North%20America%20and%20United%20States&item=States/West%20Virginia/WestVirginia1923a.sid&wid=500&hei=400&props=item\(Name,Description\),cat\(Name,Description\)&style=simple/view-dhtml.xsl](http://cartweb.geography.ua.edu:9001/StyleServer/calcrng?cat=North%20America%20and%20United%20States&item=States/West%20Virginia/WestVirginia1923a.sid&wid=500&hei=400&props=item(Name,Description),cat(Name,Description)&style=simple/view-dhtml.xsl)

“Map II of Mineral County Showing General and Economic Geology, WV Geological Survey 1923.” Web. 15 Sept 2011.

<http://cartweb.geography.ua.edu:9001/StyleServer/calcrng?cat=North%20America%20and%20United%20States&item=States/West%20Virginia/WestVirginia1923b.sid&wid=500&hei=400&props=item%28Name,Description%29,cat%28Name,Description%29&style=simple/view-dhtml.xsl>

Additional Archival Photographs

“B&O Railroad Historical Society.” *B&O Railroad Historical Society Info, Trains, Maps, Photos*. Web. 14 Dec. 2011. <http://www.borhs.org/archives/webex.html>.

IX. Appendices

A. Statistical Data: List of people interviewed

Tasha Wheeler
Josh Dietz
Todd Southerly
Jenny Jewell
Brian Jewell
Derek Lockard
Jon Brown
Sarah Self
Megan Amoroso
Arnie French
Julie French
John Brode
Bill Root
Angie Montgomery
Kenny Flanagan
Wes Durr
Bill Adams, Jr.
Bill Adams, Sr.
Chelsea Thomas
Jason Twigg
Cherise Southerly
Dave Southerly
Nathan Gillespie
Cody Higson
Kathy Whitacre
Randy Whitacre
Bethany Crites-Miltenberger
Kevin Miltenberger
Dave Miltenberger
Dave Sherman
Mandy Sherman
Tyler Dixon
Wayne Houdersheldt
Shelia Houdersheldt
Mandy Morton
Derek Dayton
Anthony Haan
Tony Haan
Susie Peer
Craig Peer
Dean Dayton
Derrick Sisk
Austin Vanmeter

Autumn Vanmeter
Todd Vanmeter
Vinnie Houdersheldt
Cody Ray
Eric Houdersheldt
Joey Adams
Joseph Jenkins, Sr.
Charlie Simpson, Jr.
Justin Schellhaus
Ken Wilson
Lucas Dent
Gary Umstot
Bill Nichols
Bruce Snyder
Chris “Chester” Snyder
Pam Umstot
LuCinda Witt
Roman Sibley
Sarah Carman
Donnie Carman
Gene Bonner
Sherry White
Ed Holstein
Stacy Holstein
Sherrie Holstine
Eric Skidmore
Matt Kidwell
Joe Corwell
Rae Llewellyn

Final results:

Childhood memories: $15/72 = 20.8\%$

Benefits: $6/72 = 8.3\%$

Music: $7/72 = 9.7\%$

People: $44/72 = 61.1\%$

B. Wordpress Blog Entries

Throughout the course of this process, I maintained a collaborative blog with my colleague, Sarah Umstot. Blog entries recount various stages in research and offer perspective on progress, challenges, and the application of academic materials. To look at the website in more detail, please visit: beyondthebarstool.wordpress.com.

My portion of the blog entries can be seen below:

1. [God bless the internet.](#)

Posted on [September 14, 2011](#)

Okay, so today proved to be substantially less frustrating than yesterday. I gave up on Goucher's resources because the majority of databases that we subscribe to aren't relevant to this particular subject. I located this incredible topographic map of West Virginia from 1920. Amazingly, maps from almost every major town/city in West Virginia were digitized through a U.S. Geological Survey project and are now held digitally through the Perry-Castaneda Library at the University of Texas at Austin. After scanning through the long list, I pulled up the map from Keyser (there weren't maps of Ridgeley or Short Gap) since it is also located in Mineral County. Another research breakthrough was achieved through my discovery of the University of Alabama Map Library. The library offers countless digitized historical maps from all states; I actually found one that illustrates the general and economic geology of Mineral County dating back to 1923. My next task is to print this map and compare it to maps done from modern-day census surveys in an effort to compare the exact coordinates on the map. That way, I will be able to recognize what parts of the county have changed over time and/or what structures or major entities used to be on or near the site where Uncle Joe's currently resides.

I also located a wonderful website that is maintained through joint efforts between federal, state, and local partners that wish to offer the public a comprehensive and seamless presentation of geospatial data of West Virginia's roadways (highways, tourist routes, country roads, etc.). While this information is not old or historical, it is extremely helpful due to the nature of the detail that went in to creating these download-able maps. I have access to multiple present-day records of this nature, including current (and relatively recent) census surveys, geographical mapping projects, and department of transportation informational materials.

I emailed the reference librarian at WVU this afternoon to investigate whether or not the library or archives there possess any resources that may be helpful to me. Not many of their collections are featured online, so I submitted a research request to inquire on the status and breadth of their holdings. If anyone can understand the plight of librarians and the overwhelming amount of research inquiries received once a new semester begins, it's me. I am totally sympathetic to the volume of request they have to handle on a daily basis, so that's why I contacted them early-on in my research process. Hopefully someone will respond to me soon.

What a productive research day/night! I'm finally starting to figure out how to adapt the way I approach this thesis in a way that allows me to produce substantial results.

Posted in [academic application](#), [research](#) | Tagged [geology](#), [historical](#), [maps](#), [records](#), [request](#), [research](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

2. [Moving forward...](#)

Posted on [September 13, 2011](#)

In my proposal, I originally stated that:

I will investigate and promote sustainability by conducting written historical and primary source research that records the cultural and historical significance of this community venue in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia. This will include research, compilation, documentation, and preservation of historical and contemporary records of the Uncle Joe's Woodpile.

I still believe this statement to hold tremendous weight in what I'm doing. After searching within various databases, checking online records, and examining social media sites that are associated with The Woodpile, I always remind myself of these words. They have become, essentially, my own personal mission statement. All my research efforts ultimately will fuse into a detailed compilation of valuable materials that offer a deeper and more meaningful perspective about the culture within The Woodpile and its community. I think it's always vital to remember the grand purpose and work towards contributing to that end goal as opposed to getting bogged down on the little details. Don't get me wrong, details are a crucial component of any project. In this instance, though, I will have to exercise control over my ability to determine whether I should persist and continue investigating dead-end queries or move on to another layer of the project that will lead me closer to my goal.

Posted in [personal reflections](#) | Tagged [proposal](#), [records](#), [research](#), [sustainability](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

[3. And the Capstone begins...](#)

Posted on [September 13, 2011](#)

When I think about this thesis project, I also echo Sarah's words of the importance of searching for what is real. People, traditions, ways of life, particular spaces, and ideals all fall into the category of what we constitute as sufficient representations of the authentic. However, for me personally, I think it is equally as important to consider what makes real *real*. I believe these considerations encompass everything from individual/collective histories, recorded perspectives, cultural unions that foster cohesiveness, and/or generational routines. Perhaps my background in archival research is affecting the way I perceive this thesis a little too much, but I am a firm believer that one cannot fully understand the present unless one considers the past.

So, I started the lengthy (and increasingly frustrating) research process last week in an attempt to tell a more complete story of The Woodpile. Already 6 days into my research and I'm continuously reassessing my priorities and changing the topics of interest. Sure, it's apparent that Uncle Joe's Woodpile has some semblance of web presence — they have Facebook and Myspace pages as well as a profile on Reverbnation, a website dedicated to the advertisement and promotion of musical groups and/or bands from all over the country. Some of the bands that play regularly at The Woodpile have listed the location as their venue and, as such, Uncle Joe's has gained virtual visibility. I also found WorldNewsInc, a site dedicated to providing the masses with audio clips and recordings of various events around the world. I found some samplings of concerts that had been held at Uncle Joe's; this format was yet another unique way to engage the public. However, none of these sites were what I was looking for; I wanted old newspaper articles, census records, deeds of ownership for the bar, and — if I was lucky — maybe even some photographs from times past. As always, I exhausted Goucher's library resources in an effort to meet some of my research needs. I tried searching within multiple databases —

NewsBank, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, America's Historical Newspapers, and NewsLink — only to turn up completely empty-handed.

Trying not to get irritated, I perused the West Virginia State Archives' website, only to discover that the information I seek (if it does, indeed, exist) isn't offered online. Instead, requests must be handwritten and mailed to the Archival office. The site specifies that requests cannot be general or abstract (i.e. I am looking for any/all information on The Woodpile) and need to be re-framed into two specific questions in order for the archivists to be able to adequately research the topic. As this is my professional field of expertise, I am aware of the dire need of having focused questions within an archival and research setting. However, at this point, I haven't really developed two super-specific questions yet. I am just generally curious about The Woodpile and the rich history that surrounds the establishment and its people. But that's a pretty huge topic as it stands now. In the book I'm reading, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You* by David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marcy, an entire chapter is dedicated to the relevance of determining where and on what a researcher will focus their efforts. They argue that:

“...some people will feel guilty about shifting their focus after they have begun their research. There is no reason why they should. Initial choices are necessarily based on limited knowledge and must naturally be considered tentative. As research goes forward, obstacles, better approaches, and worthwhile topics often reveal themselves, signaling the need to broaden, narrow, or redirect the investigation. Indeed, this refining process is normally a sign of progress” (1982, p. 16).

I think this concept is something that I should keep in mind throughout the duration of my thesis — it is inevitable that my research methods and topic of interest will change. At this point, I am still trying to hone in on exactly what it is I want to know. As I continue to search through databases, websites, books, and manuscripts, I am finding that I am building up quite a list of additional sources to consult. I have already located the application that nearby historical landmark Stewart's Tavern used when filling out the National Register of Historic Places registration form. They provide some contextual history of the tavern and its surrounding history which will prove to be tremendously helpful to my own research. I am also scheduling a time to visit the local courthouse in an effort to find census records, deeds detailing ownership of the property, county tax maps, etc. I realize that even though it may take a while to locate exactly what I desire, I will eventually produce some meaningful and relevant results. Currently, I'm just in the midst of an exciting quest — and I will prevail!

Posted in [field notes](#), [personal reflections](#), [research](#) | Tagged [archives](#), [authentic](#), [histories](#), [research](#), [virtual visibility](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

4. The man behind the legend...

Posted on [September 8, 2011](#)

This past weekend was quite an experience for me. I was able to meet legendary Arnie French, current owner and former manager of The Woodpile. Sarah and I went down to the river to his camp and were fortunate enough to be introduced to both his sons. After that initial meeting, I

knew that the evening would be eventful. Throughout the duration of the night, I was entertained by stories about the bar and how it came to be. It was amusing to me, however, that I was only given the “cliff notes” version...Arnie’s sons wanted to wait until we were in a more “appropriate” and “formal” atmosphere before they would divulge the entire story. I found this interesting, especially since those types of gatherings are the norm and they largely serve as a place where people COME to tell stories. So, I asked for clarification about their hesitations. I found out quickly that both Arnie’s sons were proud of their father and they wanted to tell the colorful tales about his life and their experiences in a place where we could record perfect sound quality. It was after that moment that I truly realized — the people of this community really care about The Woodpile. It represents so much more than just a bar — it embodies their childhood, their first drink, their fond memories with friends, their family gatherings...The Woodpile is a part of who they are. They don’t want to half-ass this cultural documentation, but rather, they want to make every effort to ensure that we record what they say in a professional, applicable, and accessible manner. I’m on-board with that way of thinking. Maybe it’s my West Virginia roots talking, but I’m tremendously excited about what’s unfolding before my eyes and I cannot wait to work more actively with members of Short Gap. Bring it on!

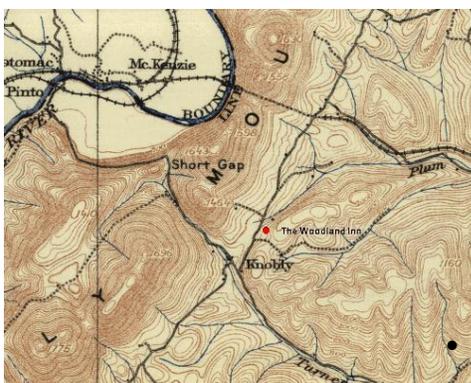
Posted in [field notes](#), [personal reflections](#) | Tagged [community](#), [culture](#), [sharing](#), [stories](#), [sustainability](#) | [1 Reply](#)

5. [Historical findings](#)

Posted on [September 16, 2011](#)

The more I study the historical maps I found online, the more excited I become about my thesis. This is part of the reason why I love this kind of research — you never know what you’ll find; sometimes results can be totally surprising and better than what you had originally envisioned! Below I have pasted an enlarged copy of one of the topographical maps of Mineral County, WV. I have marked where The Woodpile is located, just for comparative purposes so I can see how the land and surrounding cultural markers have changed over the years.

This map is courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey, recorded by State Geologist I.C. White, and dated 1923.



Sarah went to the Courthouse yesterday to locate some documents I requested. I would have gone myself, but the records division isn’t open on the weekends and with my work schedule, it’s impossible to be in West Virginia before 5pm on a weekday. Prior to Sarah’s visit, I supplied her with a list of possible records to pull. The list included the following:

Deed Book — The one for Stewart’s Tavern is located in Deed Book 255, page 662 of the Land Records for Mineral County, West Virginia. We want anything that has to do with this, especially the Verbal Boundary Description.

- Look up Arnie French – you should be able to locate records of when he bought the property (aka deed records, etc.). Anything associated with him and The Pile is worth copying.
- Ownership before that – if you were able to get in touch with him and you have the name of who Arnie bought the bar from, also try to find property ownership records about him
- Tax map — past and present. The one that was used on the application for Stewart’s Tavern was an aerial view of Short Gap. The map is dated June 1959 and the number assigned to it is F18F.

With the help of my guidelines, Sarah was able to locate deed records dating back to 1934 (the year before the bar opened as “The Woodland Inn”). The deeds include information strictly about ownership of the property itself, not ownership of the structure or building where the establishment is housed. I’m in the process of comparing all copies of these deeds and will post some field notes/reflections on them soon.

Posted in [academic application](#), [field notes](#), [personal reflections](#), [research](#) | Tagged [fieldwork](#), [geology](#), [histories](#), [maps](#), [records](#), [research](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

6. [Deeds, deeds, deeds!](#)

Posted on [September 20, 2011](#)

As I mentioned in a previous post, Sarah was able to successfully locate the deeds that I requested. It took me a while to even figure out what documents would be most useful and applicable to my research, but the time I spent preparing was totally worth it. Looking through the deeds was an eye-opening process. It’s always interesting to see official documents of this nature, especially since we were fortunate enough to find records that allowed us to trace the deed of The Woodpile (formerly The Woodland Inn) all the way back to 1934. The deeds offer insight into past owners and illustrate how the property was passed down from one generation to another.

In addition to providing a record of ownership, the various deeds also offer detailed descriptions of property boundaries. For example, in Book 231 on page 78, it is written that:

...the property is “lying and being on the East side of State Route 28, at the intersection of the Frankfort High School Road, Mineral County Secondary Route 28/9, commonly known as the Woodland Inn, in the Short Gap Community, Frankfurt District, Mineral County, West Virginia, and more particularly bounded and described as follows, to-wit...

Since the structure of the bar has always remained on this same property (although it was rebuilt at some point), this description still holds true. This particular record continues on to offer a more specific description of the business:

Beginning at an iron pipe on the East side of Route 28, said point located South 28 degrees 30’ West 605.0 feet from a power pole determined to be at the end of the 2nd line of the tract of which this is a part; thence with said 1st line and the East side of Route 28, South 28 degrees 30’

West 416.56 feet to an iron pipe at the intersection of Route 28 and the Franklin High School Road; thence with said road South 40 degrees 28' East 44.80 feet to an iron pipe; thence South 84 degrees 32' East 241.70 feet to an iron pipe; thence by division lines North 26 degrees 51' East 314.60 feet to an iron pipe; thence North 56 degrees 13' West 256.35 feet to the place of the beginning, containing 2.27 acres, more or less...

To give our readers an idea about the history and evolution of the deed for this property, I have included a timeline below based on primary source research as a result of these court documents.

- **October 3, 1934**
W.H. Jackson & Charlotte I. Jackson (of Pittsburgh, PA) (approx. 20.25 acres) transferred to Mary Alice Phillips for the sum of \$1,500.00. Willed to Ada Phillips, and then to Susan Farris (daughter and granddaughter, respectively, of Mary Phillips).
- **October 15, 1946**
Ada Philips Farris, Susan Farris Schaidt & John F. Schaidt III (of Allegany Co., MD) transferred to Floyd P. Grace.
- **August 21, 1952**
For the remaining portion of the property, Susan Farris Schaidt & John F. Schaidt III transferred to Floyd P. Grace. Willed to Sarah C. Grace (widow) and in turn to Virginia P. Blackburn.
- **January 3, 1983**
Virginia P. Blackburn & Charles E. Blackburn transferred to Elizabeth L. Simpson & Charles H. Simpson in the sum of \$85,000.00.
- **June 27, 1985**
Elizabeth L. Simpson & Charles H. Simpson (approx. 2.27 acres) transferred to Arnold L. French & Joe Dan Osceola in the sum of \$85,000.00.

Personally, I think the most exciting supplemental document included in these court records is a map detailing a Plat of Conveyance held by Charles H. Simpson (one of the more recent owners of this property, in 1985, before it was transferred to French and Osceola). The map depicts a semi-rectangular property nestled between Route 28 and the road where Frankfort High School is located. This is an incredibly helpful bit of information because it offers a visual representation of the property that dwindled all the way down to its current 2.27 acres from its original 20.25 acres. It turns out that this information is more useful than I thought it would be due to the fact that the narratives include extremely specific records of who owned the property, how much it was sold for, the exact location of where the land is located, and a description of where the boundary lines physically start and stop based on visual surveys. What a successful find!

Posted in [research](#) | Tagged [archives](#), [deeds](#), [fieldwork](#), [maps](#), [ownership](#), [primary sources](#), [records](#), [research](#), [timeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

7. [Creating metadata](#)

Posted on [September 26, 2011](#)

I'm psyched about the images that Charlie Jr. brought Sarah today at work. This was exactly what I was hoping to get my hands on — these are obviously personal photographs taken of

subjects important or interesting to the photographer, but they also represent a period of time and a culture specific to the former Woodland Inn.

In reading Sarah's post, I can totally relate to the collective idea to circulate an album to community members in an effort to identify and/or provide any sort of context to the various images shared with us. In fact, I have been talking quite a bit about this concept and its application with archival metadata in a professional setting. For example, Goucher has this great collection of archival photographs from the old campus (located in downtown Baltimore) and its "new" and/or current campus in Towson. The photograph collection is filled with buildings, individuals, and/or objects that many of us are unable to identify. While we are still discussing the possibility of implementing a strategy that helps include what's called "user-generated metadata," we think it would be an excellent way to help offer patrons some degree of information about each photograph. Copyright issues aside, this process essentially involves us posting a photograph to a digital content management system (we use ContentDM) and allowing all viewers to "tag" the image with names, locations, etc., that they feel would assist in more fully describing the photograph.

To see this project illustrated on a larger scale, you can check out the Library of Congress' partnership with Flickr in an effort to produce user-generated metadata: <http://www.flickr.com/commons/#faq>. As described on this page:

The key goals of The Commons on Flickr are to firstly show you hidden treasures in the world's public photography archives, and secondly to show how your input and knowledge can help make these collections even richer.

The introduction continues on to say that the objectives are:

1. To **increase access** to publicly-held photography collections, and
2. To provide a way for the general public to **contribute information and knowledge**.

The process of passing around a photo album with images of the past/present Woodland Inn/Woodpile embodies the exact same idea, just on a simpler, non-technological level. This action would also be an excellent way to promote sustainability within the community. Let the people tell their own story. Think about what happens when you look through old photo albums; not only do you remember who was there and where the photo was taken, but you also remember the stories that helped shape your memory of that time. These images are bound to initiate continued dialogue among community members and patrons; what one person can't remember, another will be there to fill in the blank. It's brilliant!

Posted in [academic application](#), [research](#) | Tagged [archives](#), [community](#), [context](#), [flickr](#), [metadata](#), [photographs](#), [sustainability](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

8. The 'Pile and its patrons

Posted on [October 4, 2011](#)

I went to West Virginia this past weekend for an impromptu visit with Sarah. After a delicious dinner at our favorite Mexican restaurant, Sarah and I headed to The Woodpile for the night. The band that was scheduled to play canceled last minute, so the bar wasn't nearly as crowded as it is normally. I walked in and was immediately greeted with hugs from some of my favorite people; it reaffirmed to me that it doesn't matter how long I'm gone or how infrequently I visit — I am always welcomed with open arms and a cold drink. Friday evening consisted mostly of sitting at the bar telling stories about past times until the bar finally closed. Sarah and I spent Saturday afternoon having some much-needed “down time” and discussing our reactions to the outpouring of support we have garnered throughout the course of our theses thus far. We both talked to many, many people before we even embarked on these projects, but neither of us had any idea how easily our individual goals would overlap with those of the community. Granted, we carefully approached the subject matter in a way that we felt was broadly representational, but we never imagined to have such a tremendous support system cheering us on.

On Saturday night we went back to The Woodpile. Live acoustic music floated through the air as laughing, singing, and dancing filled the room and created a warm, inviting atmosphere. Amidst all the vivacity, I was fortunate enough to meet Susie, former bartender and continued patron. She mentioned she was working on compiling an entire set of photographs to share with us — she seemed super excited about the “user-generated tagging” idea that had been discussed before. A few things that she mentioned during our conversation really struck me; Suzie said, when talking about specific people, that “[the person] was The Woodland.” She continued to explain why the entirety of the bar's culture and community was embodied in each individual she referenced. I think that concept emphasizes the fundamental nature of our project. The identity of the bar simultaneously exists within the various personalities, mentalities, and personas of the people that think of The Woodpile as — on some level — their home. It has been increasingly intriguing to observe the manifestations of The Woodpile within the patrons who visit. When I take that concept into consideration, I feel even more grateful to be directly involved in the process of communicating the importance of this place to the broader public.

Posted in [field notes](#), [personal reflections](#) | Tagged [community](#), [conversations](#), [personal stories](#), [photographs](#), [the 'pile'](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

9. The power of shared memories

Posted on [October 6, 2011](#)

In this post, I want to talk a little bit about the powerful device of sharing memories with one another and the importance of creating a useful product that can be collectively passed around by members of a community. I strongly believe that The Woodpile already exists as a place where people can come together through fellowship, music, and foodways. In fact, this concept was the original driving force behind my desire to research and investigate the role this establishment plays in the lives of the people in the area as well as the impact it has in the community. But I'm not referring to that portion of this project — I am questioning how we are going to produce a product that continues to be culturally sustainable after we leave. I'll echo once again how much I love the concept of “user-generated tagging” in regards to passing the photos around and having patrons help provide context as to when the image was taken/what individuals are

pictured. Sarah and I even discussed the possibility of scanning the images and printing out copies to pass around so people can physically write notes or jot down memories beside the photographs.

But once that information is gathered and compiled, what will we do with our final products? To help me provide a more complete answer to this question, I looked online and tried to reference other examples of instances that are similar to what we're doing. It turns out that my mom actually helped point me in the right direction in regards to this quandary. She called to tell me about a newspaper article that had been published in *The Elkin Tribune* (my local newspaper back home). The [story](#) highlights Jason Couch — local pharmacist and a man I have known since I was a little girl — and his increasingly large collection of locally significant ephemera and artifacts that he has collected for 22 years. In the article, Couch mentions that:

“These artifacts are a reminder of our past, and, collectively, they tell us a story of who we are and where we came from,” he said. “It’s not just antiques or just stuff. Every piece has a story.”

Couch has built up his personal collection by buying items from yard sales and flea markets, surfacing in the community as a caretaker of collective memories. People have approached him with photographs and memorabilia, trusting that their contributions and memories are safe with Couch. His feelings about the entire process of collecting and maintaining artifacts are synonymous with my own. He states that:

“It’s really been a community effort. People have been very generous with their time and their stories. It’s something I never could have done by myself. I hope it’s something the community will be proud of. I’ve not had anyone I’ve asked for help turn me down throughout the entire process. People have been really encouraging, and that’s what has made it fun.”

Again, Sarah and I are so grateful for the community support we’ve experienced thus far. The project isn’t for us — the reason we are doing anything at all is because it means something to the people in the community. In the article, Couch makes a statement that’s quite eloquent in its simplicity — “If what I’m doing makes any difference to anybody and opens up a few eyes to what we need to save, then it’s worth it.” That mentality is exactly what I believe as well. Sure, we can deposit our research and findings in a local archive (we were originally planning on allowing the Folklore/Folklife departmental archives at Frostburg State University to manage our work on a long-term and permanent basis). But I want more than that. I want the people I meet and the individuals who share their stories with me to have something tangible that they can reference whenever they desire. I want them to have the ability to remember the past and to communicate their memories with their children. Ultimately, I want something that exists as immediately useful and applicable. All these components can be identified in our long-term goal of publishing a book about *The Woodpile*. Like Couch feels about *Elkin*, all those involved in this project immediately recognize the importance of preserving the unique culture of this West Virginian community. One of the most critical aspects to remember is that *The Woodpile* “...didn’t get here overnight. We’re standing on a lot of shoulders of heroes we need to remember. We need to live for the future and remember the past” (Couch, *Elkin Tribune*, 2011). This thesis is so much more than research — it’s about **people** and the connections they have to

one another and to the rest of the world. I hope to communicate the beauty of that on a broader scale to help reinforce the power of uniting through shared memories.

Posted in [academic application](#), [personal reflections](#), [research](#) | Tagged [archives](#), [community](#), [conversations](#), [memories](#), [photos](#), [real](#), [sharing](#), [stories](#), [sustainability](#), [the 'pile'](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

10. [Analyzing artifacts](#)

Posted on [October 11, 2011](#)

As I move forward with this thesis, I realize the true value of the resources I have around me. For example, the book I mentioned in one of my earlier posts, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You* by David Kryvig and Myron Marty, has become my personal bible for this particular thesis project. Not only is it a wealth of information about various aspects of human and material culture, but it also offers a multitude of approaches in regards to how a researcher (or just a regular person who happens to be curious about something) can study and analyze the world around them. One particular section of the book that I keep going back to addresses the topic of artifactual analysis. The Fleming model, for example, was created in an effort to assist with the examination and synthesis of artifacts. It centers on five general properties that need to be considered during the interpretation phase of figuring out the significance, context, and history of an artifact. These properties include the determination of the artifact's history, material, construction, design, and function. To offer a more detailed explanation of this, I have included an excerpt — directly from the text (Kryvig and Marty, 1982, p. 153) — of what each property signifies:

- **History** includes where and when [the artifact] was made, by whom and for whom and why and successive changes in ownership, condition, and function.
- **Material** involves what the object is made of — woods, fibers, ceramic bodies, metals, glass, and so on.
- **Construction** has to do with the techniques of manufacture employed, workmanship, and the way the parts are organized to bring about the object's function.
- **Design** includes the structure, form, style, ornament, and iconography of the object.
- **Function** embraces both the uses (intended functions) and the roles (unintended functions) of the object in its culture, including utility, delight, and communication.

In addition to these properties, one of the most important aspects to take into consideration is the presence and eventual combination of intrinsic and extrinsic data. Essentially, this means that I will need to examine each artifact physically/directly and also include comprehensive information and research from outside sources. The culmination of these data will provide the most complete context available, especially when paired with first-hand testimonies and accounts made by patrons who remember specific events or stories about each artifact. I have already “collected” and/or recorded quite an extensive selection of artifacts about The Woodpile. As I continue the gathering and interpretation phases, I will keep these pointers in mind and make an exhaustive effort to present the most comprehensive and complete record of each artifact that my resources allow me to produce.

Posted in [academic application](#), [research](#) | Tagged [academic](#), [artifacts](#), [fieldwork](#), [historical](#), [memorabilia](#), [photographs](#), [references](#), [research](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

11. [Book of Memories](#)

Posted on [October 30, 2011](#)

Sarah and I have discussed a lot about our theses recently, especially because we are continuing to make lots of progress in regards to gathering artifacts and documenting little bits and pieces of history from The Woodpile. We both spent this past weekend at the bar, preparing for what is always a huge Halloween bash filled with laughter, dancing, live music, and general all-around merriment. In our random moments of down-time, both Sarah and I thumbed through the sets of photographs — probably about 55 or so at this point — and mused about how amazing it is to actually be able to recognize the people in the photographs when they walk into the bar today. Many of the individuals featured in said photographs still come into The Pile on a regular basis, so these materials have allowed us to develop some degree of familiarity with the patrons even before we met them in reality. Now, when walking through the old wooden door, I can immediately identify almost everyone in the bar. Conversations have most definitely sparked as a result of this project and I have heard countless stories about the circumstances surrounding each photograph and its context within the lives of the subject(s).

Although Sarah will be conducting formal interviews in an effort to capture the “full story” that each patron has to tell about their relationship with The Pile, I wanted to also create a tangible representation of this rich history through something similar to a photo-album or scrapbook. Currently, Sarah and I are creating a “Book of Memories” which will feature photocopies of each photograph that has been shared with us. On the pages within this book, there is space to jot down memories, stories, dates, and/or names in relation to what information is depicted in each photograph. As I talked about in an earlier post, the plan is to share this book with all the patrons who come into The Pile and let them create user-generated metadata through “tagging.” The book *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You* suggests that:

“The use of a photograph may help make it possible to get to the complexity of an event, because it records an event that is different for the photographer, subject, and viewer. But...a photograph is only a fragment, and with the passage of time, its moorings become unstuck.”

This is the mentality that I have in regards to my thesis; the artifacts only represent a piece of the history of The Woodpile. Ultimately, it will be the people who solidify the connections and reinforce the relevance and present-day application of those memories they share. In a project conducted by two St. Louis historians researching about a strike by the International Ladies Garment Workers in the 1930s, the idea of presenting supporting photographic evidence to actual people served as a crucial turning point. When the women looked at each photograph, they were immediately whisked back into time and flooded by emotions that they held during that phase in their lives. It is because of this concept that I believe Sarah and my theses will be hugely complimentary. The marriage between people (i.e. interviews) and their belongings (i.e. photographs or other artifact representations) will allow us to “[connect] the years between past and present [by allowing] the photographs [to help the people] re-experience their half-

remembered emotions of fear and conflict, excitement and satisfaction” (Kyvig and Marty, 1982, p. 130).

Posted in [academic application](#), [research](#) | Tagged [community](#), [conversations](#), [cultural sustainability](#), [memories](#), [personal stories](#), [photographs](#), [photos](#), [sharing](#), [sustainability](#), [Woodland Inn](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

12. [The ever-expanding Archival Inventory](#)

Posted on [November 13, 2011](#)

So the Book of Memories is really a success. It’s been widely and enthusiastically received by many people up to this point. The tagging is coming along nicely, too, though it takes more time than the average person would think. I’ve created preliminary archival records for each photograph and compiled that information into one large document containing the specific metadata for what will become my final inventory. After consulting [numerous sources](#) and considering current practices/best standards in the field, I developed a form (which, when expanded upon and completed, will be a part of this archival record series) that allows me to document all known information about each photograph. Below is an example of a current archival record from Series I of the photograph collection we have received:

Overview of the item

Image number: 1.001

Image size in inches (h x w): 4” x 6”

Image Series: 1

Photograph location: The Woodland Inn; inside on stage

Date: 1979

Photographer/Creator: Charlie Simpson, Sr.

History of the Photographer/Creator: The images in this collection were shared by Charlie Simpson, Jr. All photographs were taken when his father, Charlie Simpson, Sr., owned The Woodland Inn. The family retains all rights to the ownership of these photographs.

Person(s) in photograph: Dick Adkins

Notes:

Scope and content: The Woodland Inn (recently renamed “The Woodpile” when leased by Joe Corwell six years ago) is located in Short Gap, West Virginia. This unique place exists as a historically prominent business that operates simultaneously as a bar, musical venue, and community center that has been in operation since 1935.

Arrangement notes: Images organized chronologically by collection series. Image numbers also determined by specific photograph series (i.e. all photographs shared by Charlie Simpson, Jr. were received first and, therefore, constitute the first series of images.) Example: 1.001 signifies that the photograph is Series 1, Image 1.

Administrative information

Restrictions: Written permission for usage obtained. All images may be used for research and publication at the discretion of Lara Justis and Sarah Umstot.

Accession Information: The metadata inventory and image files are formatted digitally and

will be accessible at the Frostburg State University Archives. Hard copies of all metadata and corresponding photographs will also be printed for further reference.

Processing Information: Each image has been scanned in color on a Hewlett-Packard flatbed scanner at a high-resolution (600 dpi) so as to produce a final image that meets current archival standards.

Although it's a work-in-progress, I am able to add more information to each archival record everyday. It's amazing to me what stories, context, and histories can be generated as a result of collaboration with a community. I feel confident about moving forward and continuing this process for the rest of the photographs that have been shared with me. What an awesome collection!

Posted in [academic application](#), [research](#) | Tagged [archives](#), [artifacts](#), [community](#), [conversations](#), [memorabilia](#), [memories](#), [metadata](#), [records](#), [research](#), [sharing](#), [Woodland Inn](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

13. [Dissecting The Woodpile](#)

Posted on [November 14, 2011](#)

As a reader, you may or may not have read all my posts up to this point in my thesis process. My purpose from the very beginning was to illustrate that The Woodpile exists as a culturally sustainable community center. It is often extremely difficult — if not impossible — to merely state why something is the way it is, especially taking into account that many meaningful aspects that comprise the culture of this place are rarely outwardly visible. My intent is not to *tell* my audience why I believe what I do, but rather, to *show* them. To more fully explain the relevance, centrality, and overall purpose of The Woodpile, I have conducted primary source research and gathered data to help support my hypothesis of this entity being sustainable. To date, I have a multitude of inter-relating examples that help provide more concrete explanations of sustainability. These examples include:

- Maps (in digital and analog formats) that include historical tax area and county line boundaries.
- Maps (in digital formats only) that include present-day records of West Virginia's roadways (highways, tourist routes, country roads, etc.). I located a website that is maintained through joint efforts between federal, state, and local partners that wish to offer the public a comprehensive and seamless presentation of geospatial data including current (and relatively recent) census surveys, geographical mapping projects, and department of transportation informational materials.
- Deed records that date back to 1934. The deeds include information strictly about ownership of the property itself and offer detailed descriptions of property boundaries, not ownership of the structure or building where the establishment is housed.
- Plat of Conveyance records. This is an incredibly helpful bit of information because it offers a visual representation of the property that dwindled all the way down to its current 2.27 acres from its original 20.25 acres. It turns out that this information is more useful than I thought it would be due to the fact that the narratives include extremely specific records of who owned the

property, how much it was sold for, the exact location of where the land is located, and a description of where the boundary lines physically start and stop based on visual surveys.

- Photographs from past times at The Woodland Inn that now exist as archival records that depict various aspects of the culture surrounding this location. Because we were able to gain access to the photograph collections of multiple people, we have a much wider representation of cultural happenings.
- Book of Memories. This scrapbook features copies of all original images shared with us. After images are added to its pages, the book re-circulates around The Woodpile so that patrons can tag any relevant components/persons in the photographs. Conversations are generated as a result of this process, so I'm supplied with even more rich cultural history.
- Formalized archival metadata records that are compiled based on the context tags given to each image and written beside each photograph from the Book of Memories. This will help streamline all information in an effort to document the "who, what, where, when, why, and how" for every image, once again offering a more complete view of The Woodland Inn.

With these inter-related research components, I am able to offer a more comprehensive view of The Woodland/The Woodpile and its community. The blog posts are intended to offer personal insight and interpretation about the following questions: Why is this relevant? What's the meaning? Based on this evaluation, how does this component prove that The Woodpile is sustainable? I feel as though my studies up to this point are extremely detailed, offering insight into a vibrant community that has been in operation for seventy-six years. Based upon the inclusion of primary source information and feedback, I can confidently say that The Woodpile will remain a fixture in the Short Gap area for many, many years to come.

Posted in [academic application](#), [personal reflections](#), [research](#) | Tagged [academic](#), [archives](#), [culture](#), [maps](#), [meaning](#), [metadata](#), [personal stories](#), [records](#), [research](#), [sustainability](#), [the 'pile'](#), [Woodland Inn](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

14. The evolution of culture

Posted on [November 20, 2011](#)

And the photographs just keep on coming. Never did I imagine that the community response would reach this level and yet, I am pleasantly surprised by the dedication and eagerness to share from the patrons I have grown to love so much. The process of tagging some form of context on the pages of the "Book of Memories" is definitely not a straightforward or cut and dry process. Sure, once the words are written down, I have more pieces to add to the grander puzzle that comprises the essence of The Woodland Inn. But it's profoundly more than just words; it's a feeling, a way of life, and a mentality that has been embodied by the community and passed down to children and grandchildren.

My purpose for undertaking this thesis was to illustrate – through detailed examples – why The Woodpile played and continues to play such a pivotal role in the lives of its patrons. The process of generating metadata through patron tagging in the "Book of Memories" reinforces my ability to do so. In an earlier post, I mentioned a project where female labor workers (who were, at the time, quite elderly) were shown images of the conditions in which they worked when they were

younger. For most of the women involved in this project, these images were the only visual representation they had ever seen from this time period in their lives. The emotional response to said photographs was hugely powerful. This reaction triggered some kind of inner-reflection in each of the women and immediately caused them to relive and/or recollect elements of their own stories that had been lost over time. Sitting in the room together while looking at these photographs, the women were able to piece together collective memories based upon individual stories and experiences. In this example, the photographs existed as the only medium that triggered these reactions. Essentially, mere images were successfully able to unlock entire chapters of history.

This example can be directly translated into the project at The Woodpile. Many of the patrons remember specific events that they've experienced over the years, but certain images definitely trigger emotionally charged responses that result in vivid recollections and storytelling. Whether it's a story about growing up in the bar and sitting in one of the worn leather stools at 8 years old, a snippet of a memory surrounding a beloved old man who used to be the "life" of the bar, or a narrative about a mysterious "Mohawk Party," everyone remembers *something* about The Woodland Inn.

With that in mind, it's difficult to pinpoint exactly what the relevance of the bar is within the community because the bottom line is that it means something different to each and every patron who walks through the doors. To some, it exists as a milestone in their journey from boyhood to manhood. As the first place that many had their first drink at 16 or 17 after school, The Woodland Inn is fondly remembered as the place where it all started. To others, it exists as a warm, friendly, and welcoming home. Once a person sits down at the counter, they are supported, encouraged, and cared for by the other patrons who have evolved into a pseudo-family. I can't count the number of times that I've heard "It's okay [insert name here], I've got your back. You can get through this." That says a lot for the type of atmosphere and environment present at the bar. Still, to many more, The Woodpile exists as a place where they can escape the burdens and responsibilities of everyday life and just unwind with friends. I can immediately see a change in attitude and mentality from when a person walks in compared to when they've been sitting in a barstool for a while. Stress is lifted and relaxation becomes the dominating state of being.

That said, I think the multiple identities of The Woodland are its true strength. Because various aspects of the bar resonate so strongly with members of the community, The Woodpile has evolved into an establishment that represents tiny little slivers of the life that sustains it. But the relationship between The Woodpile and its patrons is symbiotic – the bar needs the financial support and frequent attendance of its community members just like the community members need the ambiance, welcoming arms, and liveliness of the bar. Each entity simultaneously does whatever it takes to sustain the other. And that, alone, speaks volumes.

Posted in [academic application](#), [personal reflections](#), [research](#) | Tagged [academic](#), [archives](#), [capstone](#), [community](#), [culture](#), [memories](#), [records](#), [research](#), [sustainability](#), [thesis](#), [Woodland Inn](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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